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# HEADLINES



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# ALDI COMING TO MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

ALDI has announced that it is coming to the Milford Plaza Shopping Center. The new store will be located in the section of the shopping center recently vacated by Sav-A-Lot.

“We are excited to confirm we are planning to open a new ALDI store in Milford,” Jeff Baehr, Frederick Division Vice-President of ALDI, said. “We are opening the store later this year, but do not have further details at this time.”

Bringing ALDI to Milford required some changes to leases for stores already in the shopping center, James Grant of Tsionas Management told Milford City Council in June 2021. The management company required approval from council to place a sign for Sherwin Williams farther north in front of the shopping center in order to move that store to the former Sears location.

Grant explained at the time that The Plaza is in talks with ALDI who were considering placing a store in the

former Sav-A-Lot location. In order for ALDI to have enough of a footprint, they would need to take over the Sherwin Williams store that is adjacent, requiring Tsionas Management to relocate Sherwin Williams.

“To give you a brief overview of what has happened,” Grant said. “Sherwin Williams has a lease, and we are asking them to move. There is no clause in the lease for that which means they come to the landlord and ask for everything. When a store moves into the center, we don’t usually touch the façade. However, we are going to redo the entire façade on the front of the former Sears store, do the entire fit out inside the store and they are asking for this sign in order to move. If we don’t give them what they want, they can say “we are fine where are” and we cannot make them move. If that happens, you don’t get ALDI.” Council approved the request unanimously.

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ALDI has been in the grocery business for more than 40 years, following the same guiding principle that great quality should come with low prices. The Albrecht family opened the first ALDI in 1961 in Germany and opened their first store in Iowa in 1976. They are headquartered in Batavia, Illinois, and grown to more than 2,000 stores across the country. The company has a no-frills shopping model offering high-quality food, excellent customer service, low prices every day and a smaller store that makes shopping less timely.



# CULTURE



Q2 PHOTO BY MARCIA REED

# MILFORD MUSEUM BRINGS COUNCIL UP TO DATE

photo by Ann Lebengood

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford Museum Executive Director Claudia Leister spoke to Milford City Council about how the museum had progressed over the past year. Leister explained that the museum was technically a commission of the city and had been established in 1983, growing steadily since it began.

“I’ve been doing this which was part time supposedly for a couple years and this is 11 years now that I have been at the museum and trying to discover what is in the wonderful collections that we have,” Leister said. “There have been three part-time people working at the museum. One of them retired this past year due to health concerns and we realized that it was time we needed a full-time museum operations manager, some-

one to be there all the time and to be aware, especially someone with expertise in technology, which I do not have, to work with our websites and work with social media.”

Leister continued that the museum had hired Nicole Rogers who worked as an intern during a few summers and been employed by the state for three years in their museum system. Leister stated that Rogers had “jumped in with great ideas and making a lot of progress already.” Much of the funding provided to the museum goes to getting the word out about the collections. A new History Club has been established at Milford High School. The club contacted the museum and offered to work with them. In addition to the new History Club,

See MUSEUM on page 6

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**MUSEUM from page 5**

Leister stated that they had been working with Dr. Brittany Hazzard, supervisor of Equity and Support at Milford School District who had been helping with the museum's new African American exhibit.

“What we're trying to do is to reach the African American community letting them know their stories are important. Their photographs are important. We have changed this new exhibit and we will be having a big grand opening for that the morning of the Bug and Bud festival and you will all receive an invitation to that,” Leister said. “And we have come up with brochures that will go out to the churches, telling them what we are doing and with so many of the churches being closed now at the moment, we haven't got those out yet. But with Dr. Hazzard, we have come up with a questionnaire for students to ask them ‘have you talked to your grandfather, your grandmother or what do they know what do they remember what were their favorite things?’ So, we're trying to get that oral history and to save it there at the museum. “

In addition to expanding and adding exhibits, Leister has discovered that the museum has become a stopping place for new people either moving to Milford or thinking about it. She explained that they stop in because they've seen historic houses for sale, and they want information on that. This has led the museum to gather more information on Milford people and Milford houses so that information can be available to the public in order to answer their questions.

“At the same time, that kind of deals with our storage area for our collections. We've gotten new rolling storage

**See MUSEUM on page 7**



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## MUSEUM from page 6

racks, a new kitchen sink because ours had been there since the 50s,” Leister said. “Lots of things should be at a museum and are because they’re old. We’re adding new collections because people are realizing that we don’t want them to throw these things out. You know the paper things, it’s like old paper stuff? Well, we’re interested in that. We want the tickets from the movies. We want the programs, we want to save this, and our goal is saving the past for the future because if we don’t, nobody else is.”

Over the past few months, Leister stated that more than 300 items have been added to the collections and all of those must be entered into a database. Each item is assigned a catalog number, photographed and documented which, in the past, had fallen to Leister to do on her own. The museum has built up a larger volunteer base, many who have museum backgrounds. They hope to bring back the speaker’s series and had hoped to bring in Orlando Camp in February, but COVID prevented that from happening. She also stated that the museum numbers were down due to the pandemic. In 2019, over 3,000 people visited the museum while in 2020 just over 1,000 were in the building. Visitation did increase in 2021 and organizations are again booking tours while schools hope to return to field trips to the site.

“Our fundraisers that are planned. We’re going to be open during the library’s Easter Scavenger Hunt. We had 200 people and I love it,” Leister said. “When I say to people have you been in the museum before? And so many say ‘oh I’ve always wanted to but I’ve never taken the opportunity.’ So, this gets them in, their family in

See MUSEUM on page 8



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## MUSEUM from page 7

and they're surprised because it looks like a small square red brick building outside and they're surprised how large it seems inside. One of the things that's also going to be changing and we're working on with our operations manager is installing a small museum store. We figure we really need to take more advantage of the fact that the state bug, the ladybug was due to a classroom and a school here in Milford and that's why we've got the statue out front. We're working on signage for that so people can understand more. It's like well, 'why do you have a ladybug?' And so especially the kids, you know, like that story."

Walking tours are also planned for the upcoming year with a tour planned in north Milford in May and one in south Milford in September. Hippiefest is planned for August 20 on the lawn of Causey Mansion. Last year, about 300 people attended the event and Leister hoped council would come listen to the band and pull out their "tie-dye t-shirts" for the event.

"The other thing we started a year ago was our Ghost Walk and that was extremely successful. We had to limit the numbers of people because I just didn't have enough volunteers to be the tour guides and to lead that and so I have gotten a lot more people enthusiastic about doing that this year," Leister said. "I did all the research to find who was drowned, was poisoned, was murdered. All of these things that happened specific to Milford and so I have these stories out of the newspaper. We are fortunate to have all of the original Milford Chronicles in the museum and on microfilm reader, we have them able to look out there so I do the research and find the

stories and so the ghost walk will go again this year. It will start at the Towers and then come down Walnut Street to end up at Causey Mansion. We plan on doing one not just the Saturday night but also a Friday for families because many people asked about that, can we bring our children. We won't get into all the gory details for the family walk. But more and more people are interested in cemetery tours and ghost walks. And so is that something that we can provide."

In 2017, Leister stated that the museum received funding from then Rep. Harvey Kenton to create plans for an addition on the building. Currently, there are no handicap accessible bathrooms in the museum and no meeting room space. This year, the museum was approached by Rep. Bryan Shupe about the project, and he is working on some state funding.

"I wanted to know since you had mentioned the ghost walk and you have more volunteers this year," Councilman Baer asked. "Is it possible to extend the ghost walk to two weekends instead of just one?"

Leister answered that it was definitely a good idea and that she would suggest that to the events committee which was meeting that week under the direction of the operations manager.



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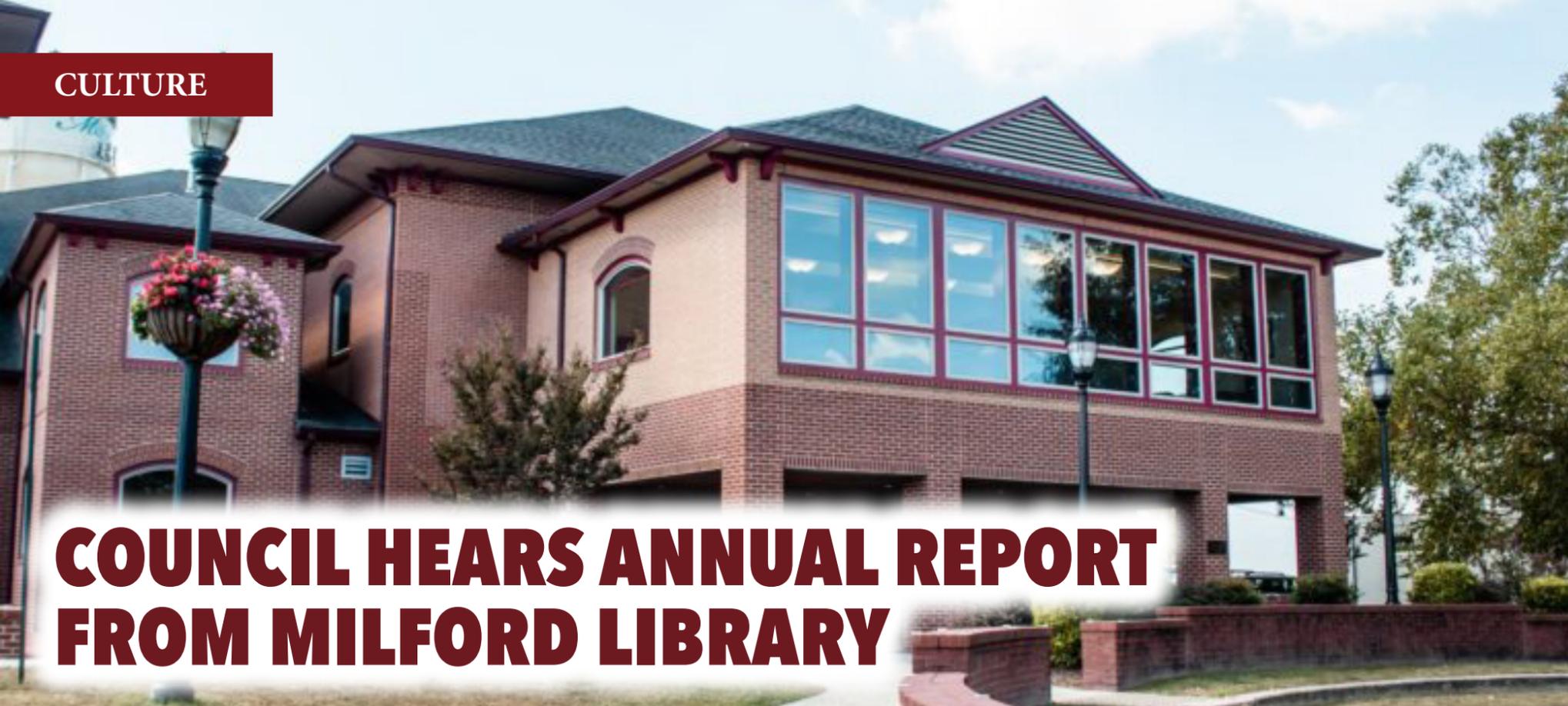


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# COUNCIL HEARS ANNUAL REPORT FROM MILFORD LIBRARY

BY TERRY ROGERS

Vivian Erickson, director of the Milford Library, told Milford City Council that the past year had been a year of recovery after dealing with a lengthy closure during the pandemic. According to Erickson, there were 86,000 visits to the library the past year. Since the door counters began in May, she estimates the number could be closer to 100,000.

“Our Adult collection is roughly 37,000 items we have in our library, and 44,000 were circulated this past year. Our adult programs feature everything from local organizations bringing valuable information, Jazzercise club, live performances such as Murder by the Book, and even Possum Point Players,” Erickson said. “Music In the Park held in July is our biggest event and it’s about all told, maybe 1,000 to 1,200 people will come and see

that over the four weeks or five weeks that we have the programs in July. And if we take that outlier of July out, then our programs still show well attended.”

The program and outreach coordinators have been busy this year, according to Erickson, attending various meetings throughout the city and helping the library become more involved in the community. A grant from the city allowed the library to purchase 10 new laptops and mice, providing valuable service to not only the community but the staff as well. Erickson stated that there are computer classes offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but the instructor is willing to set up one-on-one training for anyone interested.

See **LIBRARY** on page 10

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**LIBRARY from page 9**

“Each month brings new patrons to sign up for new library cards. Some come from the community, but many have been moving in from other places,” Erickson said. “Milford is growing. Along with our books and other services, we always want to show them that we have apps they can get as well as eBooks or audiobooks, even movies and Flipster magazines, we have online magazines not a lot of people know that, but if you want to browse through a magazine, it’s kind of cool.”

The Teen Center is also growing steadily to the point they have had to move to a larger room in the library. The coordinator for the Teen Center is utilizing unique ways to advertise, including purchasing an ad at the movie theater. For four months, each movie will have a 15-second slide designed to catch the attention of teens and grow the Teen Center. The center is most populated during the summer months when school is out. The Children’s Center has over 13,000 items available and circulation in that section was 26,000 over the past year. The library is still offering curbside pick-up, but it is on a much more limited basis than it was during the pandemic.

“The percentage of patrons that we’re currently reaching is 32% of our population service area which is 27,601 people. We are only reaching at this point 32% of them,” Erickson said. “We want to do better. Many of our patrons use the library for faxing and printing and the computers. Many others use our online services. But, there are still people in our service area that have yet to enter our doors. One of the things we want to do this year is to have a needs assessment done to put the finger on the pulse of our community. What do Milford citizens

**See LIBRARY on page 11**

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**LIBRARY from page 10**

new and old want to see in their library? Where can we do a better job with our community?”

In addition to the needs assessment, Erickson stated that the required increase in salaries over the next few years to \$15 would impact them significantly as a non-profit. Because they do not have a product to sell whose prices could be raised to cover that increase, higher salaries could be difficult for them to cover.

“The library has done a great job in communicating to the public and being more open to receiving the public much better,” Councilwoman Katrina Wilson said. “And I’ve heard a couple people that have moved here from out of state, and they just love going to our library and that makes me happy because I’ve been here all my life. And we used to hear different comments. So, I want to thank the library for really trying to accommodate our diverse population.”

Mayor Archie Campbell asked if the Hispanic and Latino community were more receptive to visiting the library than they have been in the past.

“This has been one of the areas we’ve been struggling with is we have materials; we want to have things like maybe language classes and such. They’re not going to come through our door. We’re going to have to go out and that’s one of the reasons that we want to be more involved in the community,” Erickson said. “Things like the Bug and Bud Festival. I want to get a table out there, right in the middle of everything that says Milford Public Library, let’s be more visible, that we can reach communities that are not yet coming through our door.”

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

Downtown Milford Inc. (DMI) presented its annual report to Milford City Council on March 28. James Rabe, president of DMI, presented an overview of the past year as well as a look at their future three-year plan.

“The total indirect and direct economic impact of DMI for the year was just over \$335,000. So, combination of money spent downtown, as well as total volunteer hours and volunteer impact through the multitude of events, the different planning that we’d had throughout fiscal year end 2021,” Rabe said. “So pretty good year. Through March 31, DMI is able to report we’ve had a net income of \$34,081.61. We did do a complete website rebuild and we did have several grants awarded to our organization, as well as to the Vinyard Shipyard project this past year.”

Rabe reported that two long-time board members, Peggy Reilly and Lang Redden completed their six-year terms on the board and were required to step off for a year under the DMI bylaws. Yanelle Powell and Sarah

## CITY COUNCIL HEARS DMI ANNUAL REPORT

Bluhm both had to resign from the Promotions Committee with Rabe stating they would be missed.

“As far as our 2021 and 2022 event schedule, we did move the St. Patrick’s Day pub crawl, which was missed by many, to October,” Rabe said. “We did recently hold the Irish Music and Dance Festival. We are adding Bug and Bud this year. It’ll be a smaller event, just due to the reduced time-planning schedule. That event normally would have started back in November as our planning. We weren’t sure if we would be having any events in first and second quarter back in November. So upcoming is the Sussex and Kent County marker ceremony as well as the Ladybug Festival and then we’re adding back Light up the River this year.”

As far as social media, DMI had 36,831 social engagements from its targeted marketing and are expecting to surpass 75,000 in 2022. The organization began a new direct marketing and social media outreach with targeted posts towards, again, value addition for the downtown and surrounding areas. DMI is highlighting downtown businesses to give them more exposure. Four new businesses opened downtown, two expanded, two closed and two additional downtown artists were added to existing business suites. Three properties were purchased downtown with the goal to open new businesses.

“We are again requesting from the city, the fifth year for funding for \$47,500 which includes a CPI increase of seven percent. And if someone who is better at finance would like to double check that I’d appreciate it, please keep me honest. Make sure that’s accurate,” Rabe said.

“And on top of that, what we’re looking to include in future years as well as the Ladybug Festival for the amount of \$30,000. Unfortunately, that event has increased the cost to DMI to \$40,000. Now, we’re going to make up the other \$10,000 through the other funding we’ve received and have been able to hold on to and then our hope is in future years we’ll grow that event to pay for itself completely. And I do believe this year it will pay for itself completely because we put a lot of effort into additional fundraising.”

According to Rabe, DMI plans to add dedicated event planning services to increase frequency. The complexity and maturity of the events that it brings downtown include primary and secondary stakeholders, providing social media management services to those businesses so they can focus on running their company rather than worrying about marketing services. Consultants have been identified who will either volunteer or offer reduced cost services to downtown as a buying group along with free website management and free website building services. DMI hopes to add a downtown vacancy portal display to showcase available properties, create an entrepreneur toolkit and business portal to help owners navigate what are sometimes seen as complicated Small Business Association policies and formalize DMI’s own business lending fund.

“Creation of an arts festival in line with our town themes, bringing in additional senior center focused events, reintroduction of the International Food Festival,

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**DMI from page 12**

an introduction of a New Year's Eve downtown event, reintroduction of Eat in the Street, reintroduction of the Brewgrass Festival or something similar along those lines, and then obviously additional items," Rabe said. "You know, we're always looking for additional events to bring in people to Milford."

Councilman Andy Fulton asked if DMI had considered doing any type of event for Cinco de Mayo.

"So we talked about that. We talked about moving the Pub Crawl to Cinco de Mayo," Rabe said. "It grew to tacos and tequila. So yes, but we were again afraid, and the concern was that no one would host us because when we started the planning cycle for that a lot of businesses were going if I open up my business and I bring people in, they can take off their masks while they drink. What's my personal liability? So, I would love that, but it was too early this year to get that in and start that planning cycle. And that was our concern. That's why we moved to St. Patrick's Day events, because people love pub crawls. That is by far one of our best events. So, we're just hoping to bring that into Oktoberfest, and I think people will still share the love across Milford."



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# BUSINESS



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BY TERRY ROGERS

Danielle Swallow with Delaware Sea Grant, a program based at the University of Delaware in Lewes, presented and update to Milford City Council regarding the Waterways Infrastructure and Investment Network (WIIN). The group was initially formed to help Milford and Slaughter Beach be more competitive in obtaining federal grants designed not only to protect the watershed that makes up the Mispillion River and Cedar Creek areas.

“We’re focusing on the corridor between Milford and Slaughter Beach and as I’m sure many of you know, this area has an abundance of natural resources of terrific areas for birding and recreation and all kinds of water recreation. And we know that Milford has a distinct interest in economic development and trying to continue to brand its identity and tie it to the Mispillion River,” Swallow said. “And Slaughter Beach has a great affinity for the natural resources that surround their town. They have a very strong environmental stewardship ethic and I think that they have been wanting time to really under-

## WIIN COALITION HELPING DEVELOP ECO-TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

stand what the value of the natural resources are in the area to help us to advocate for federal and state funding. And so, we thought that there was a common interest in both communities to really learn what the value of the natural resources are in this area. And how to leverage that for your respective economic goals. “

In addition to the environmental and economic benefits to the watershed, Swallow indicated that there are also resilience goals tied to helping each community manage climate change which is thought to have led to flooding in both towns. WIIN also looks at particular investment strategies that improve access to resources, recreation opportunities and sustainable economic development. WIIN obtained a two-year grant that allowed them to complete an economic study which found the area’s natural resources are valued at several million each year in leisure and recreation activities alone. It also allowed the group to complete a vulnerability assessment which is nearing completion.

“The vulnerability assessment that’s nearing completion is really taking a look at these resources in terms of what changes are on the horizon or happening now, that potentially may present some risks for the resources in

See WIIN on page 17



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the area. So we're looking at land use changes and patterns, social vulnerability indicators, but also particularly flood risk, both current flood risk and future flood risk, because as we know, the height of our high tides is increasing over time because of sea level rise," Swallow said. "And so with that higher tide brings extra potential for flooding and high tide as well as when storms blow and then that storm surge is blowing in on top of higher water level to begin with. We're taking a look across the board at the watershed resources to see what might be vulnerable."

Identifying vulnerability is important because the next phase of the project will be to identify investment ideas. This will include locations and assets where smart investment can be made but not be impacted by flooding. It can also identify areas where flooding is a risk and create solutions that could mitigate flooding.

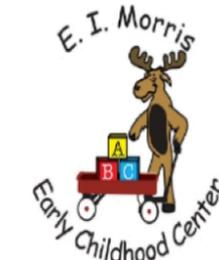
"We're going to engage again with various stakeholders in the community representing marine industry, recreation businesses, even our federal partners and manage the wildlife refuge. And we're going to engage them in brainstorming ideas," Swallow said. "This may include where there should there be more access points for kayaking, for example, should there be eco tours and sort of a birding trail developed for the area? Maybe there's need to be projects that focus on conservation of certain vital habitat, you know, all those ideas are open. And we also are going to be continuing to generate and gather economic data for the region, as well as identifying any infrastructure projects that are already planned to understand the costs and the planning associated

with those so that we keep those in mind as we're identifying some new potential ideas. And then once we have those potential ideas, we'll estimate the benefits and costs of them. Compare that to what the vulnerability assessment says. And then we'll develop a set of recommendations that will go into a final investment strategy, which we will hope to include by the end of the year."

The final investment strategy will include recommendations crafted with community input as well as the advice of coalition members who have expertise in the environment.

"So the types of projects that might be eligible include eco-tourism projects, Edu-tourism, which focused on education, the restoration or preservation natural resources, and looking to grow and further nurture environmentally friendly industries like agriculture," Swallow said. "We are looking at oyster aquaculture in the area of Slaughter Beach. And then finally, we will be working with Milford residents on the development of a messaging and marketing strategy, so that your community is not just left with a plan and then you know, no momentum to implement it. We want to be able to give you some tools to help you attract some investment and partners to carry forward with implementation."

Councilman Andy Fulton asked if there was any consideration to protecting privately owned land along the Mispillion River. Swallow indicated that nothing was off the table and that they were noting land use patterns along waterways. Councilman Jason James asked what types of flood mitigation were being



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April 6 (Wednesday)	4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
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- Please call 422-1650 to schedule a date and time
  - Please indicate if you will need an interpreter
- Child must be 5 years old by August 31, 2022 to begin kindergarten
- You must bring your child for screening on your scheduled date and time to assist

Documents required for registration include:

- State Issued Birth Certificate (with raised seal)
- Proof of Residency (utility bill, lease agreement, mortgage papers) within the Milford School District
- Guardianship/custody information if applicable
- Immunization (shot) record
- Physical Exam
- Tuberculosis Risk Assessment or PPD results
- Lead test result

\*Please note: Any family who is interested in being considered for the 2022-2023 Spanish Immersion Program lottery will need to register on or before June 7<sup>th</sup>. Any late registrants will be added to the waiting list.

See WIIN on page 18



reviewed as developers were not interested investing in an area prone to flooding.

“Milford, is essentially a coastal town right, you’re right on the river, Slaughter Beach as well and our coastal towns are going to be experiencing more as time goes on,” Swallow said. “But there are potentially ways to mitigate some of that. And the nice thing is that this project is giving you some planning information, so you will be in a better position to apply for federal grants. I work with FEMA on pre-disaster mitigation funding and helping to connect communities with that funding. And I can tell you that having analyses like the vulnerability assessment and having community input and a community based process can be very helpful in helping to go after some of that mitigation funding. But the key is to identify the specific types of projects and remedies. Whether that’s looking at living shorelines that can sort of slow sort of wave action or looking at enhanced buffers that provide a green buffer between the built environment and the natural environment. There’s different factors and different ways of mitigating, sometimes there’s tide gates and things like that. But we can look at those kinds of projects and what that’s what we’re hoping to do next through this process.”

Councilman Dan Marabello asked what type and how much funding was available as a project of this magnitude could be in the tens of millions of dollars. Swallow pointed out that the federal government is starting to prioritize more projects that are related to climate change infrastructure.

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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



PHOTO BY ANN LEBENGOOD

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BY TERRY ROGERS

On Saturday, April 23, residents in Milford's Ward 1 will head to the polls to vote for one of their representatives on City Council. Michael Boyle and Linda Bretzer both filed to run for the seat. Mayor Archie Campbell as well as Councilmen Andrew Fulton and Brian Baer along with Councilwoman Katrina Wilson also filed but will run unopposed for their ward seats.

All individuals registered to vote with the state of Delaware by March 24, 2022, at an address within Ward 1 of the city of Milford are eligible to vote in the election. Residents who need to register should contact the Department of Elections in Sussex County at 302-856-5367 or visit <https://ivote.de.gov>. Qualified non-resident property owners must be properly registered by the city of Milford by March 24, 2022. To learn if you are a qualified non-resident voter, contact the City Clerk's Office at 302-422-1111, extension 1300 or 1303 where they may also register by phone.

## BRETZER RUNNING FOR WARD 1 COUNCIL SEAT

Bretzer and Boyle were both provided the following questions and answers that follow are in Bretzer's words in order to offer voters more details on their platform, what they hope to do on council and what issues they see as important in the city.

**Q: Can you give me your background? Education, career, family, etc.**

**A:** I was born and raised in Massachusetts, but I have called Delaware home for the past 17 years. I have a daughter and son-in-law in Laurel, DE, and a son and three grandchildren in Colorado. I have a dog and a granddog. I have an Associate's Degree and a Bachelor's Degree. My career is now where the Lord leads me. I am an active member of the Milford Church of God. I am a certified instructor in the U.S. Constitution and hopefully will be able to get my certification in the Delaware Constitution as well.

**Q: What made you decide to run for council?**

**A:** During the pandemic, I thought a lot about running for city council. I felt it was time to stand up for a country I love and believe in. It's time to take a stand and bring back the grassroots of what our country was founded on! My friends approached me to run for city council and after some serious praying and listening to my friends, I decided to do it.

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# BOYLE RUNNING FOR WARD 1 COUNCIL SEAT



BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford's Ward 1 will head to the polls to vote for one of their representatives on City Council. Michael Boyle and Linda Bretzer both filed to run for the seat. Mayor Archie Campbell as well as Councilmen Andrew Fulton and Brian Baer along with Councilwoman Katrina Wilson also filed but will run unopposed for their ward seats.

All individuals registered to vote with the state of Delaware by March 24, 2022, at an address within Ward 1 of the city of Milford are eligible to vote in the election. Residents who need to register should contact the Department of Elections in Sussex County at 302-856-5367 or visit <https://ivote.de.gov>. Qualified non-resident property owners must be properly registered by the city of Milford by March 24, 2022. To learn if you are a qualified non-resident voter, contact the City Clerk's Office at 302-422-1111, extension 1300 or 1303 where they may also register by phone.

Bretzer and Boyle were both provided the following questions and answers that follow are in Boyle's words in order to offer voters more details on their platform, what they hope to do on council and what issues they see as important in the city.

**Q: Can you give me your background? Education, career, family, etc.**

**A: BACKGROUND**

- Milford City Council since 2018
- Served for 3½ years on Milford Planning and Zoning Commission
- Department of Defense, Contractor Policy Analyst for 17 years
- Retired, U.S Army after 28+ years of total service

**EDUCATION**

- Lieutenant Colonel Retired: U.S. Army with 28+ years of service
- Graduate of U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
- Graduate of LaSalle University

**VOLUNTEER WORK**

- Meadows At Shawnee HOA Board of Directors
- Served on the Milford Middle School Committee

**Q: What made you decide to run for council?**

**A:** As a member of the City Council my primary concern has always been for the people who live and work in Milford today, and in the future. I am always been available to meet with, learn from, understand and address the concerns of residents. This type of connection that local government has with its residents, strengthens the community's bond with its elected officials and is a practice I will continue following if elected to another term on council.

My background has instilled in me the temperament and understanding of what it takes to achieve results. I believe I am the best qualified candidate fully commit-

ted to addressing the challenges confronting Milford and working for the best interests of all our residents as our city continues to grow.

But the main reason I am running for re-election is my strong personal commitment to Milford; it is my home. I want to see Milford thrive while maintaining its small town feel and charm, sustain a solid jobs base, provide good affordable housing, continue to provide first class policing for a safe diverse community, and a good school system essential to Milford's future. I am running to realize these goals for Milford.

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# MILFORD LOOKS AT INSTALLING EV CHARGING STATIONS

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent workshop, Milford City Council discussed the possibility of installing charging stations for electric vehicles (EV). Public Works Director Mike Svaby presented information on the growing popularity of EVs as well as details on what it would require for Milford to install charging stations in the city.

“There’s over 113,000 chargers currently in the US, California is the state with the highest count with just over 41,000 chargers available,” Svaby said. “In order to properly tool up with the right charging systems, you have to understand what cars are selling the best. I’m pretty sure there might be somebody here in chambers tonight that may know just a wee bit about this. So, I’ll defer at any time if there’s anything to add. But Tesla is the largest EV vehicle maker in the world. They have over 936,000 cars in 2021. They’ve also got the largest

market capitalization of any car company, being a very unique type of car company, at \$948 billion as of January 2022. So they’ve got money and they are spending it. Knowing that that is the magnitude we’re looking at this evening. It can still be said that 90 to 95% of charging of all vehicles still occurs at home”

Svaby also explained that traditional car companies are entering the EV market with Volkswagen leading the industry, selling 762,000 EVs in 2021 with a market cap of \$134.6 billion. However, Toyota, in third place has earned the most from EVs, selling 563,697 in 2021 and earning \$294.6 billion. Svaby stated that Tesla is a niche company even though they are a large part of the market. Currently, there are over 12,000 Tesla-branded chargers in North America with nine located in Delaware. The Tesla chargers in this state are placed as far north as

Claymont, south to Rehoboth and west to Seaford. According to Tesla, an EV can be charged up to 80 percent of its capacity in about 30 minutes at a supercharger station.

“So, here’s a real interesting nugget on the Tesla chargers. They recently unveiled a faster V3 supercharger that is going to begin appearing here shortly in the next few months. This charger will allow a Model 3 long range operating at peak efficiency to recover up to 75 miles of charge in five minutes,” Svaby said. “That is so far ahead of even the ordinary Tesla charger, much less Levels 1 and 2 chargers. And most of you probably don’t know much about the charger, so I’m going to talk about that next. But that’s such a tremendous achievement. I mean, what it’s going to do, you’re going to be able to get 75 miles of charge in five minutes. That’s putting charge rates at literally up to 1,000 miles in one hour. That’s going to reduce Tesla charging times by 50%.”

According to Svaby, there are three types of EV chargers available. A Level 1 provides two to five miles of range per one hour of charging. A Level 2 charger provides 10 to 20 miles of range per one hour of charging. Both Level 1 and 2 chargers only have a J1772 connector. The DC Fast Chargers provide 60 to 80 miles per 20 minutes of charging and offer three types of connectors, CCS, CHAdeMO and Tesla.

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## AUDIT DRAFT PRESENTED TO CITY COUNCIL

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford's Finance director Lou Vitola, presented the first draft of the city's financial statement audit during a recent workshop. The draft was provided to give council a preliminary review of the ongoing audit process. Vitola explained that there was a delay in the process for this year due to finance department staffing issues. Vitola asked council to pay focus on the financial statements, providing an explanation of what the reports were.

"The governmental balance sheet is really the only one with a recognizable name, the utility balance sheets or the proprietary funds, and they're called the statement of net position," Vitola said. "So, the balance sheet has the statement of net position with net position being somewhat synonymous with the private sector equivalent of equity or shareholders equity, and then the income statements are called statements of revenues, expenditures and changes in net position. You may have heard a private

sector income statement called a P&L or profit and loss statement. So, a change in net position can be positive or negative. Just like private sector profit and loss. So that's how you put the income statements for the government all in perspective and on par with the private sector."

Vitola stated that the city's financial performance was strong and that budget projects were ahead of the FY22 budget process. The change in net position was also strong across proprietary funds, registering nearly \$6 million compared to \$3.8 million in FY20. Governmental funds were slightly higher at \$1.48 million compared to \$1.44 million in FY20 while governmental cash, excluding ARPA funds, increased by almost \$2 million. Cash and investment balances increased by almost \$5 million. According to Vitola, the city is required to implement Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities for FY21 which eliminates the Agency Fund. This fund separated certain Parks and Recreation funding as well as the Carlisle Fire Company Enhancement Funds and the Kent County Sewer Impact Fee.

"I can't tell you why GASB is making the change and what the purpose of it is. There seem to be good reason for having that segregated from our core activities," Vitola said. "But now it's being absorbed back into our core activities. But I think after those two things, we've got final testing and review by the city's new auditors."

The only negative regarding the FY21 financials, according to Vitola, is the delay in getting them prepared. He explained they are about three weeks behind what they were the previous year and that he had implemented steps to improve the timing in future years. Councilman Jason James reminded his fellow council members how important this report was.

"Council is responsible for the audit report and the accuracy of the audit for all so that's Council's position. So please take a look at it so when it is presented you agree that it's materially correct in nature, so know that that is your responsibility. It's not the directors, city manager, that is Council's responsibility," Councilman James said. "So, please read it and ask questions. You know, dig into it if you would, please. So, I think I think it's very, very, very important. And when I spoke to the auditor a couple days ago, he was doing fraud inquiries. I did that as a past auditor. When the audit report is presented prior to council's adoption, the council needs the opportunity to ask the auditor questions, not the person that prepared the financials. But to ask the auditor questions directly."

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# CITY CONSOLIDATES FEE SCHEDULE

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford City Council recently consolidated its fee schedule. The move for the consolidation was prompted by an Aid-In construction fee related to the Shawnee Acres pump station.

“The Shawnee Acres pump station was, within last couple of years, upgraded and expanded to encompass more capacity. From a sewer wastewater standpoint, we would like to recoup the costs that were expended by the city through the adoption of an Aid-In construction fee,” Rob Pierce, city planner, said. “This would be an additional tapping charge that any new developments that would utilize that pump station would pay so we could repeat the expansion of that facility that we provided to the developers.”

According to Pierce, the Aid-In construction fee would be \$771 per unit in any development that needed to tap into that pumping station. It is similar to a fee set for developers who tap into the pumping station constructed for Bayhealth whose cost was shared by the Wickersham property. This fee prompted staff to realize that they had different resolutions for sewer fees, water fees, electricity rates and more. In order to make it easier for city staff and the public who may need to determine their fees, staff felt it better to consolidate the fees into one schedule.

“We’ve consolidated those all into one city fee schedule that we will likely add additional items to. We didn’t have enough time to pull things out of the electric tier

or do some other items that the finance department was interested in at this time,” Pierce said. “But we wanted to get this consolidated since we were making some revisions to the wireless facilities ordinance and adding that Aid-In construction charge. We added in the wireless facilities to the permit charge and a right of way license charge for an annual fee of \$270 per location. There’s also a minor revision at the request of the Parks and Rec director for some of his park rates and facilities. We just added the one last item there says all of the park area must be approved by the Milford Parks and Rec at a rate of \$50 per four hours for individuals and nonprofit renters and \$100 for for-profit renters. We added the Aid-In construction charge into the sewer section. So those are the only changes to the fees other than consolidating them all in one location. Hopefully going forward will present this to council at budget time every year.”

Councilman Andy Fulton questioned the \$50 for four hours to rent parks, stating that he felt that was not an adequate price. He did not feel someone should be able to rent Bicentennial Park for just \$50.

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# EDUCATION



# MSD DISCUSSES ADVERTISING AND FUNDRAISING POLICIES

BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford School District Board of Education discussed changes to the district's advertising in schools and fundraising policies. The advertising policy had not been updated since 1982 while the fundraising policy was updated in 2018.

"This policy relates to advertisements in our schools directed at our both our staff and our students," Dr. Sara Croce, chief financial officer, said. "It condenses the policy, and the changes just have a review process in place for the superintendent or the designee. So that may be the building principal to make sure that we are aware of what's being distributed to our staff and students from an advertising perspective."

Board member David Vezmar pointed out that the policy specifically named businesses and asked if it would also apply to religious organizations. Dr. Croce explained that the original policy only referred to commercial advertising, but administration could review to be sure there was not already a policy directed at other types of organizations. Vice-President Rony Baltazar-Lopez asked what the purpose in updating the policy was and Dr. Croce stated that since it had not been reviewed since 1982, staff felt it should be reviewed to be sure the language was current and that it was more condensed.

"The only reason I asked is the language just seems very broad to me. I don't know. I could possibly perceive some issues down the road with advertising," Baltazar-

Lopez said. "I'm happy to work with that person or anybody else to kind of see if we can make this a little bit more or less broad, if that makes sense. So, I'm still trying to figure out how this I mean, because I could see some issues." Dr. Croce agreed to work with Baltazar-Lopez to adjust any language in the policy before it came back to the board for approval.

President Jason Miller asked how the new policy would affect athletics and the booster programs as they often solicit funds from businesses who then placed advertising in programs or other locations.

"They go through the approval process and the superintendent or the designee in this case, maybe the athletics director, and then we also have a fundraiser approval process that they would go through as well," Dr. Croce said.

In addition to the advertising policy, the board discussed updating the Milford School District Funding Policy. The new policy would include a statement that "fundraisers for the benefit of outside organizations must be approved by the building administrator and shall not solicit funds from students." The added language would allow the district to delete another policy entitled "Soliciting Funds from Students," condensing two policies into one. Miller asked for an example of a fundraiser that benefitted an outside organization.

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

As part of a policy review, Milford School District is updating its policy related to visitors in school buildings. The policy was last reviewed in 1982.

“This policy has just been updated to reflect some of our current procedures that we have established throughout the school. In particular, it is to be reflective of the process that we do ask all visitors and guests to our schools or to arrange for a meeting that they do work through our main offices, and that upon arrival, they do provide an ID of some sort,” Dr. Bridget Amory, director of Student Learning, said. “Whether it be a driver’s license or a passport of some sorts that we can indeed run the visitor’s badge for them and then we can make sure that we are escorting them or at least directing them into the right place and also making sure that we have guidance. In some cases when we do have visitors, we do need to make sure that they are supervised visitations. So, this policy would allow for us to be able to

## OUTSIDE VISITS TO SCHOOLS POLICY DISCUSSED

continue to do that and just have updated alignment with the policy and our current procedures.”

President Jason Miller commented that when he visited another district, he was provided with stickers with a photo that degraded within 24 hours.

“So, it doesn’t allow a visitor that came in previously to use the same sticker and reenter the school because the logo is clearly gone,” Miller said. “That’s a technology that I was very impressed with and something that we may want to consider. It doesn’t seem like that would be very costly. I think it’s a rather new technology.”

Dr. Amory explained that the district had systems in place to address those issues and that staff did not want to include the exact technology used in the schools as it was often updated. If the exact technology was in the policy, it would require an update to the policy. She did say that they could look into something similar for district schools. Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, asked Teresa Wallace, principal at Lulu M. Ross Elementary School, to come forward and explain the current process to the board.

“When a visitor comes in, they have their ID and it’s a Raptor system. So, the ID is then sent through the system and it’s essentially like a databank that tells us any Megan’s Law information that we may need and that prints a little sticker that the person would wear and as you said it does go away eventually,” Wallace said. “But it does work for the visitor when they are

walking around the building, it is very visible for that. But that system, that ID system, it does stay in our system. It’s a way of tracking things in our building so we can quickly look if there’s a fire drill or an emergency, we can see who’s in the building. They also come back through the office and then we can take them out and that way we know that the person has left if we don’t see them walk through the door.”

Wallace explained that the system also prints where a visitor is supposed to be in the school. If someone is supposed to be in the nurse’s office and they are upstairs, staff can quickly see they are in an area they should not be.

“We don’t have just the photo, but everything else we pretty much had that whole system. Like I said, that’s one thing we did upgrade a couple years ago invested in. It was like a more extensive approach as far as background, at least some type of background check before we provide those visitor passes,” Dr. Dickerson said. “That’s worked well and maybe we can look whether we can find a photo system. I just wanted to let people know where how extensive our system is. And I think that has been a valuable upgrade for us over the last few years, even for our field trips. Our volunteers also utilize that system before we go out.”

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BY TERRY ROGERS

Milford School District Board of Education is updating its Communication with the Public policy as well as the Communication with the Public: News Releases. The communication policy had been in place since 2009 while the news release policy was last updated in 1982.

“We tried to condense it some also, obviously realizing at this point time we have a public relations officer and wanting to make sure we include her role as far as policy,” said Superintendent Dr. Kevin Dickerson. “Through this previous policy, we did have our attorney review this policy as well, just to ensure that we were covered with things we need to cover in such policy. And he also helped us a little bit here.”

Board Vice-President Rony Baltazar-Lopez asked if it was possible to change the title so it included communication with the public and the media. Dr. Dickerson stated that they felt there was a need to shorten the title, but they would take a look at whether to better refine it. Baltazar-Lopez also pointed out that the original policy named the president of the school board as their spokesperson and the new policy did not. President Jason Miller agreed with Baltazar-Lopez that the official spokesperson for the Board of Education should be the president and not the superintendent. Dr. Dickerson asked if it would be okay for him to speak to the district attorney before changing that to which Miller agreed.

“In the fourth paragraph, can we add a clause in there that mentioned Sport Policy 5313 which is the policy that we had last year?” Baltazar-Lopez continued. “In

that same paragraph, there’s a second section that says at the beginning of each school year giving parents and guardians the opportunity to decline or consent to publish names and or pictures of their students. Is there any way that we can add a provision that included to make sure that information is distributed to parents in their native language?”

Dr. Dickerson agreed to add the sports policy and explained that they try to provide all forms to parents in their native language. He believed there was already a policy requiring that, but would check to be sure as he did not want to add a policy that was already in place. Baltazar-Lopez also suggested that the district include social media platforms they use in the policy so the community has an opportunity to see them and follow them.

“I think at one time we looked at some of that, Mr. Baltazar-Lopez. When you look at everything here, we tried to make it a bit more concise here as far as the communication, so I think one concern we did have with this with it was that this was going to become very lengthy,” Dr. Dickerson said. “I think one thing that we were very concerned with is how lengthy this was becoming and could we have this concise enough that would cover us for how we should be communicating with the public We’ll also discuss with our attorney and then we’ll bring back up we can bring back a first read again next time.”

Baltazar-Lopez did not disagree with Dr. Dickerson,



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but felt it would not be difficult to put two sentences in the policy stating which social media the district used.

“My only comment to Mr. Baltazar-Lopez is that social media or technology changes so quickly. I mean, if this policy was done the way you’re talking 10 years ago, we’d have MySpace on there,” So I feel we don’t want to always make it a staple that we’re constantly having to revise policies to eliminate this and add this. I’m okay personally with keeping it in social media as a broader term and not labeling specifics. But there may be another resource where we can put those places where we are isn’t directly embedded in a policy that forces us to constantly have to update them every time social media changes. So I apologize, but that is just my thought.”

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# HEALTH

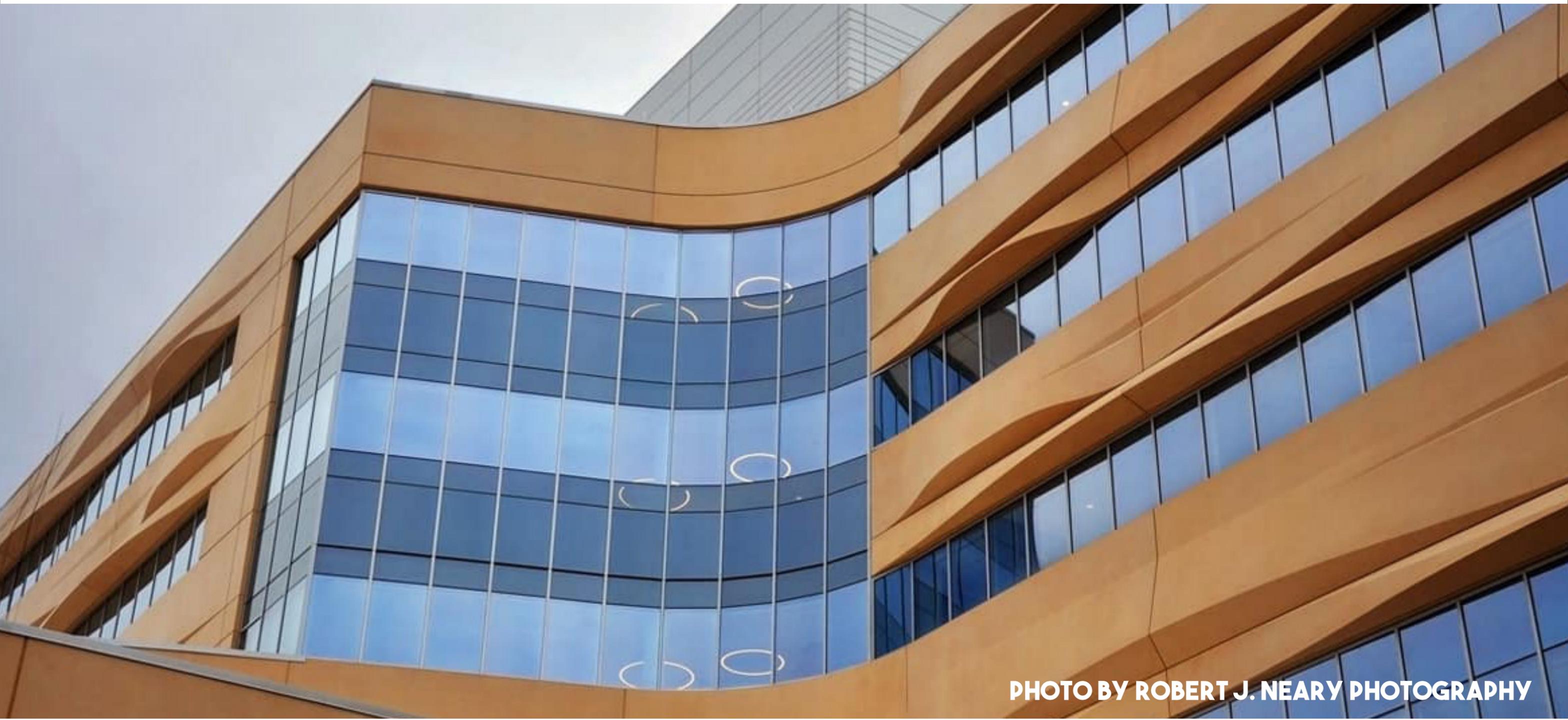


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# BOARD REVIEWS PROPOSED TOBACCO AND VAPING POLICY

Juul, and other electronic cigarettes present a health and safety hazard that can have serious consequences for users as well as non-users in a school environment. The purpose of this policy is to prohibit student possession, use, transfer, purchase and sale of tobacco and vaping products, including Juul and other electronic cigarettes on school grounds, buses and during school activity. Last month, we heard from Dr. Peel with an update on tobacco and vaping in our schools. We have a similar policy like this for drugs and alcohol. So I thought for purposes of transparency and just so that we have clarity on these that we are consistent as to policy, I checked with Dr. Dickerson, he checked with legal counsel, they had a few edits, but this is the final draft that they are okay with.”

When asked if there was a policy in place already, Baltazar-Lopez indicated that there was a policy prohibiting the use in the Student Code of Conduct, but not in board policy. President Jason Miller pointed out that although there was a punishment for this in the student handbook, there was not exactly a rule explaining what the student was being punished for.

“We do have consequences for tobacco and vaping products, as far as if they are in school where a student has either tobacco or vaping products in school, Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, said. “We do have consequences for that. This establishes a policy and it is one, though, we do need to make sure it does, obviously,

gets included here with our with our code of conduct or basically our handbooks. But we do have consequences already established in tiers as far as violations when tobacco and vaping products are found in school with students.”

Miller stated that although there was something in the Student Code of Conduct about tobacco and vaping, there was not a specific policy against having the items as there was for alcohol or drugs.

“The alcohol and drug policy is under the personnel sections, which is really directed towards personnel. In our code of conduct, there are sections on drugs and alcohol. There’s also a section on non-controlled substances, also a section on abusive, aggressive groups and gang policy,” Dr. Jason Peel, director of Human Resources and School Climate, said. “One way to look at this as we could add this into that policy, rather than creating a new policy. It’s almost as if we had this separate policy that maybe all of these should also be separate. Policies that then can be compiled into a handbook per se. But for example, in the drug and alcohol section in the student handbook or the code of conduct, it does talk about prohibiting that sort of thing. It’s not just the consequences and what takes place. So, there is a little bit of redundancy, like the law enforcement.”

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**BY TERRY ROGERS**

At a recent meeting, Milford Board of Education added penalties to the district’s policy for students who are caught with tobacco and vaping products. Vice-President Rony Baltazar-Lopez realized that there was no policy specifically prohibiting such products in schools and drafted one for the board’s review.

“Essentially the synopsis of this policy is to recognize that tobacco and vaping products, including the product,



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# SPECTATOR CONDUCT POLICY TO BE UPDATED

BY TERRY ROGERS

Last updated in 2006, Milford School District discussed updating their policy on “Spectator Conduct at Sporting Events”. Dr. Kevin Dickerson, superintendent, felt that the policy was good, but the district needed to add language from the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA).

“We made it more concise. Also, legal counsel kind of strengthened the part where the trespass from school and notify law enforcement, if necessary, was the right set of consequences,” Dr. Jason Peel, director of Human Resources and School Climate, said. “We also added, in regards to DIAA, that they are also able to investigate spectator actions and then also take some actions of their own through their sportsmanship committee.”

President Jason Miller stated that he and board member Kris Thompson volunteered to work on a Student Athlete Ethics policy. He felt that this would tie in nicely with that policy as well.

“Mr. (Nick) Brennan (athletics director) is in the process and actually has a really nice draft to start forming a committee,” Dr. Dickerson said. “So we’ve been discussing with him, reviewing some of the drafts. He’s been looking at different athletes, student athletic, athlete coaches manuals across the state, at their code of conduct, and we’d like to put a draft together and then have a committee review and discuss maybe you know what things were missing what things to revise those

type of things. So Mr. Brennan isn’t really at this point in time ready to have something approved in the summer for the 2020 to 2023 school year.”

The policy update adds “vulgar, obscene or demeaning” verbal or physical conduct directed at spectators, participants, officials or sponsors as violations. It also includes the word “or events” which could cover non-athletic events. Spectators who violate the policy may be removed from the event and could be issued a notice of trespass. Law enforcement may be called should any spectator who disobey an official or the administration.

The section pertaining to DIAA allows the district to report violations to the organization who may then issue a reprimand, probation or suspension from attending future events.

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# POLICE & FIRE





BY TERRY ROGERS

On Monday, March 28, Milford Police Chief Kenneth Brown was presented with the Trilogy Award by Retired Chief John Horsman, past president of FBI-LEEDA, an agency that advances the science and art of law enforcement leadership around the world. The Trilogy Award is given to an individual who has successfully completed FBI-LEEDA's Supervisor Leadership Institute, Command Leadership Institute and Executive Leadership Institute.

"FBI-LEEDA is an international organization of over 6,000 members," Chief Horsman said. "And, in Delaware, we've trained over 1,000 police officers since 2013 at absolutely no costs to law enforcement. In 2017, the Executive Board approved the Trilogy Award to recognize organizations that have embraced the leadership."

Horsman explained that all members of an organization's command executive staff must have completed the three courses in order to receive the award which is the highest honor bestowed by FBI-LEEDA. He stated that Milford Police Department had achieved that and,

## MILFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES TRILOGY AWARD

as such, were only the second organization in Delaware to do so.

"This award is almost exclusively because of this man right here," Chief Brown said. "When he started being real active in FBI-LEEDA and got on the executive board, he is the one who got all that done for Delaware. And these classes would have cost \$600 to \$700 a person. We were able to get not only all of our command staff, but sergeants in Milford are all trained with this training. So, I cannot thank John enough."

Chief Horsman deflected Chief Brown's comments. "This award comes straight under the leadership of Chief Brown. Without his efforts this could not have been possible," Chief Horsman said. "You should be very proud of your chief of police, your police department, your command staff when they're all doing the same training. It means that they're all on the same page. They're speaking the same language, and that's a big, big deal. But Chief Brown can travel to New Castle County and see that same Trilogy Award sitting on the desk of the Chief of Police in New Castle. When he sees that trophy award, he knows he can speak to that Chief of Police or the executive officer in the same language. And that's a huge, huge benefit for someone in this state, especially as small as Delaware is and where we all know each other. Thank you very much."



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# CARLISLE PRESENTS ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL



BY TERRY ROGERS

Carlisle Fire Company presented its annual report to Milford City Council on March 28. According to President Ryan Knowles and Treasurer Joe Morris, the fire company has seen a significant increase in EMS calls.

“In 2021, we responded to a total of 4,248 calls for assistance. 646 of those are fire, 3,602 were EMS responses,” Knowles said. “The department also supported several special service requests and public outreach events. In an effort to effectively appraise the operation of our company, we utilize a strategic planning technique called a SWOT analysis, to help identify our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to our overall mission and the services we provide to our service area. Our strengths are our people, members with diverse backgrounds and experiences, continued community involvement, purchase and maintaining the state of the art apparatus and equipment. Our weaknesses are limited manpower, and increased training requirements. Our opportunities are expansion of EMS service, upgrade to equipment, utilization of new tech-

nology, planning for future growth and our threats are complacency, motivation, low recruitment rate, our retention rate and predictability of funding and continued development and annexation.”

Morris told council that fire calls have remained pretty consistent over the past 21 years while the EMS calls have risen continuously upward. For comparison, Morris stated that the city saw a population increase of 42 percent from 2000 to 2010 while EMS calls during that time rose by 93 percent. From 2010 to 2021, the population of Milford increased by just over 30 percent while call volumes increased by 37 percent.

“When you look at that 21-year period overall, that equates to about a 72.5% population increase for the city and our EMS call volume increase of 130%,” Morris said. “Looking at last year’s data call volume for EMS of 3,600 calls, that averages out over a year to about 9.8 calls per day, round that up to about 10 calls per day. Based on the current trends we’ve seen, looking out over the next 10 years based on growth that we foresee in the

city, being conservative and factoring in a 50% increase in population, we would need to protect a city of about just shy of 19,000—about 18,726. That same percentage of 50% in our EMS call volume would take us up to 5,400 calls a year. Averaged out, that is about 14.8 or about 15 calls per day for EMS crews.”

Morris continued that funding from the city has remained pretty consistent at \$140,000 per year over the past 21 years. For the next year, Carlisle is asking the city for \$217,000 which would include the \$35,000 in city utilities that Carlisle must pay. The remainder would be used for employee payroll and insurance. He acknowledged that comparing the increased amount to \$140,000 seems to be a significant increase, but when looking at the 21-year average of increased calls at 130 percent and a funding increase of only about 55 percent, it seems less excessive.

“And when the city looks at that and council looks at that, we ask that you keep in mind that the continuous call volume, the continuous growth of the city has put quite a strain on our EMS crews. Our equipment, our apparatus we purchase continues to become more expensive. And in order to maintain our EMS crews and be competitive with other departments around us, salaries have to be a consideration for us, and we are getting to the point where we lose good employees by doing this by ourselves. So, we are asking for the city to take that into consideration and consider helping us out a little bit on the salary side with our employees.”

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