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**January 2, 2024**  
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photo link: Delaware Children's Museum



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# HEADLINES



photo link: [Milford Police Department](#)



# TJ WEBB HOLDS BOOK SIGNING

BY TERRY ROGERS

Saturday, Dec. 23, TJ Webb, a former Senior Corporal with the Milford Police Department, signed copies of his new book “Just One More” at Mispillion River Brewing in Milford. Webb, who was shot while serving a federal

warrant in Rehoboth, has written the book to describe how that fateful night changed his life forever and to encourage others to fight through adversity.

“This book tells the story of how one man’s survival, success, failure, struggle, compromise, recovery and rebuilding has flourished into an entity of hope,” his book says on the back cover.

The book begins with the shooting, the thoughts that ran through Webb’s mind as he lay bleeding on the ground, wedged under a parked car. The book explains that he initially felt no pain, although he could feel and taste a bullet in his mouth, before he goes into what got him into law enforcement initially.

Webb medically retired in 2022, two years after the shooting after serving as a police officer for 19 years. During his career, he served in the Patrol Division, SWAT, Criminal Investigations Unit, Narcotics Unit, K9 Unit and the U.S. Marshal’s Fugitive Task Force. He was awarded the U.S. Marshal’s Purple Heart, the na-

tional Police 181 Officers Hall of Fame Purple Heart, the Fraternal Order of Police Medal of Valor and The National Association of Police Officers TopCop Award.

Today, Webb runs a non-profit “Fit 4 Duty Foundation,” which encourages physical and mental health in law enforcement through CrossFit. He also travels the country telling his story to other first responders to help them deal with situations like his.

“From all accounts, TJ Webb should not have survived the murderous attack against him on Dec. 10, 2020,” Steve Murphy writes in a forward for the book. “Most people would not have survived. But God said it wasn’t TJ’s day to die. TJ’s story is a ‘must-read,’ one of facing danger and looking death in the face; a story of running towards the fight, not away from it; a story of risking his own life for the sake and safety of others; a story of dealing with the circumstances one finds themselves in and making the best of a bad situation; a story of perseverance, focus, dedication and especially motivation to stop feeling sorry for ourselves and get on with life.”

Webb himself credits others with his survival, including his wife Amanda and son Reese, along with his parents and in-laws. In the acknowledgements, Webb gives credit where he feels it should be.

“To the six, Mike, Kim, Josh, Niki, George and Rhonda, thank you for always being there,” Webb wrote. “We are truly a family that worked as a team to get through

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some of life's toughest times. To all of my brothers and sisters in law enforcement who continue to fight evil every day, keep true to your Ethos and the ones fighting beside you. To all the medical staff that patched me up and the amazing physical therapist along the way, especially Sim, my physical therapist for nearly two years, thank you!"

The book is available for purchase at <https://thet-jwebb.com>.



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# CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)



# SANTA DELIVERS CARDS TO GENESIS HEALTHCARE

bring you a card created especially for you by children in the local schools.”

Residents beamed as Santa made his rounds, talking to them about their Christmas celebration and wishing them a happy holiday season. Santa was assisted by two elves as well. Some residents were enjoying a holiday party in the cafeteria with cupcakes and hot chocolate when Santa arrived.

“Aren’t you all adorable!” Mary, one of the residents exclaimed as Santa handed her the card a student made for her. “You just look so cute!”

Trish Gerken, public information officer for Milford School District, was very appreciative that Joey Phillips came up with the idea to have children make cards and hand them out personally to residents.

“I sincerely thank Joey for coming up with this idea,” Gerken said. “This was such a great idea and the kids loved the project. What a great way to celebrate the holidays walking these hallways with a true Santa!”

Brenda, the program director at Genesis was also very appreciative of the project. “This is such a great thing to do for these people,” Brenda said. “Taking care of them is my passion and to have others step up and recognize what they need, it does my heart good.”



**BY TERRY ROGERS**

On Friday, Dec.22, just before he had to head back to the North Pole to prepare for his midnight ride around the world, Santa stopped at Genesis Healthcare in Milford to deliver handmade cards to residents in the facility. The cards were created by students at Mispillion, Lulu M. Ross and Benjamin Banneker Elementary Schools. Cards were also made for residents of the Delaware Veteran’s Home.

“Ho, Ho, Ho,” Santa cried as he stepped into every room that was open to visitors. “Santa has arrived to

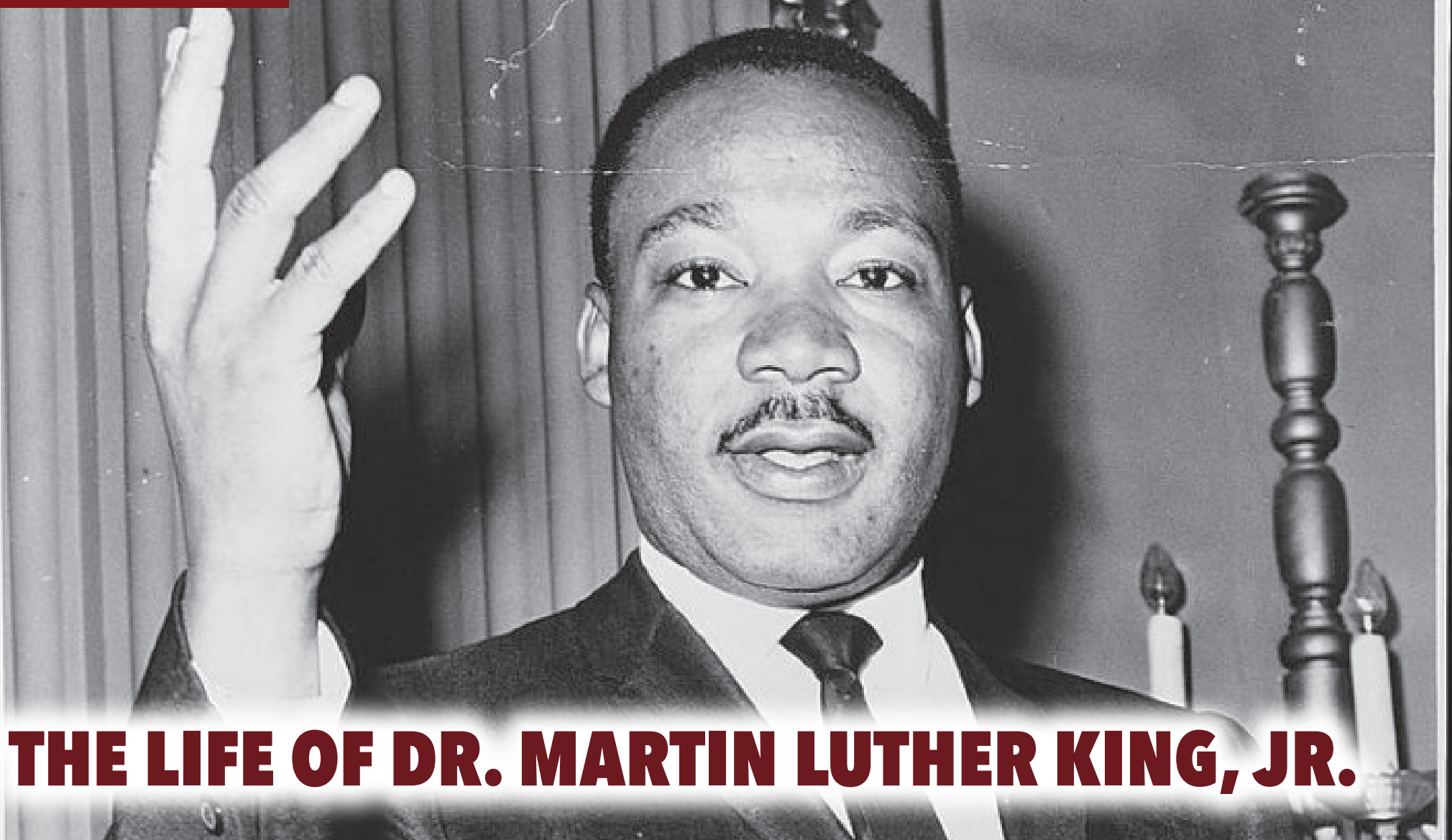
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# THE LIFE OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Milford Museum American History Series continues with a presentation to celebrate the upcoming birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Presented by Rev. Dr. John G. Moore, Sr., this event will take place on Saturday, Jan. 13, 1 p.m. at the Milford Public Library. This program will focus on Dr. King's life from his youth in Georgia, his years as the leader of the civil rights movement, the acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize and his tragic assassination in Memphis, TN. Rev. Dr. Moore will also re-enact three of Dr. King's most

famous speeches: "We Shall Overcome," "I Have a Dream," and his final speech, "The Mountain Top," presented the night before his assassination.

Rev. Moore, Sr. is a native of Philadelphia. In 2005, he retired from the United States Air Force after 20 years of honorable service to his nation. He currently serves as Director of Philanthropy and Engagement for the United Way of Delaware. Dr. Moore is also president and CEO of Total Increase Ministries and is the senior

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pastor of the Dover Christian Church in Dover. He has a bachelors degree from Western New England University, a Masters in Business Administration from Delaware State University and a Doctorate of Ministry from Friends International Christian University. Rev. Dr. Moore is an internationally recognized minister and orator who has spoken in hundreds of schools, colleges, churches, correctional facilities, and organizational gatherings locally and virtually, throughout the world. A highlight for Rev. Moore occurred on Aug. 26, 2011, when he was selected to recite "I Have A Dream" at a private dedication of 7,500 people in Washington, DC, for the opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial.

Sponsored by the Milford Museum, these monthly programs focus on a variety of topics concerning local, state and national history. These presentations are held on the second Saturday of each month, at 1 p.m., in the Milford Public Library located at 11 S.E. Front Street in Milford. For more information, please contact the museum at (302) 424-1080, [tom@milforddemuseum.org](mailto:tom@milforddemuseum.org). These programs are offered through a generous grant from The Delaware Heritage Commission.



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# THE ORIGINS OF NEW YEAR TRADITIONS

BY TERRY ROGERS

So many traditions circle around the start of the new year, from making resolutions to shooting fireworks, even the date that marks the start of the new year. Some of these traditions have carried over for centuries while others are fairly new.

One tradition, kissing at midnight, began as a way to ensure that you have romance throughout the year. It is believed to be a custom that began in ancient Europe as a way to ward off evil spirits as well. Some historians link it to the Saturnalia celebrations of early Rome as well.

Another tradition is the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” at midnight. The song never actually mentions the new year, but it is credited to Guy Lombardo and his band, the Royal Canadians, who performed the song on radio

on Dec. 31, 1929, and continued to do so for many years after. It is actually a Scottish song with “auld lang syne” translating into “old long since.” The lyrics focus on putting the past behind and moving into the future, which make it the perfect accompaniment to New Year’s Eve.

The New Year’s Eve ball drop in Times Square is another holiday tradition for many, even if you have never been in New York on the holiday. This tradition began in the early 1900s, although the ball drop itself did not begin until 1907.

Lentils are a popular tradition on New Year’s Eve as well, especially in Italy, while in the United States, many families insist on eating black-eyed peas on the first day of the year in order to bring luck. It is said the tradition

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began as the coin shape of the beans symbolized prosperity. New Year resolutions are also common during this time, a tradition that began as far back as ancient Babylon. The resolutions are meant to help achieve goals for the upcoming year.

In Brazil, it is a tradition to jump seven waves to start the new year, making one wish for each wave. Several communities in Delaware host Polar Bear plunges on New Year's Day, so that may be a fun tradition to start so you can get in your wave jumping. In Columbia, people walk around the block carrying an empty suitcase on New Year's Eve in order to travel in the

upcoming year while in Saratoga Springs, NY, it is customary to smash a peppermint pig before eating a piece of the candy to bring good health, happiness and prosperity in the new year.

Fireworks are another tradition around the world on New Year's Eve, something that may have started in China in the seventh century. Loud sounds were used to ward off evil spirits while in some cultures, the color of the fireworks correspond with love, luck and health. Romanians believe that tossing a coin in the river on New Year's Eve will bring good luck.

In Scotland, a tradition known as "footing" deter-

mines whether your household will be prosperous. The superstition says that the first person to enter your home at midnight must be a tall, dark-haired male. He should also bring coins or black buns with him for luck.

Of course, no New Year celebration would be complete without a toast. This practice dates back to the ancient world when people often raised a glass to good health. A champagne toast on New Year's dates back to the 17th century when wealthy French citizens toasted to symbolize prosperity.



# BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)



## JAMMIN' JANUARY KICKS OFF IN DOWNTOWN MILFORD

BY TERRY ROGERS

With the holiday season behind us, Downtown Milford, Inc. (DMI) hopes to keep the excitement going downtown with a brand new event, Jammin' January. For the month of January, downtown merchants will offer specials, whether it be fun entertainment, crafts or specialty items.

"It seemed like this holiday season was extra special downtown," Janne Collins, executive director of DMI said. "We thought this was a great way to just keep celebrating the wonderful things we have in our downtown area."

Merchants are simply asked to reach out to DMI and let them know what they plan to offer throughout the month. The event, special or entertainment will be added to the new DMI [activity calendar](#). This calendar is free

and accessible to anyone. Once the DMI website has been updated in the next few months, a link will be added for easy access. A card with a QR code is also available in the DMI office to carry in a wallet in order to access the calendar easily while on the go or click on the [Event Board](#) and save it to your phone screen for easy use.

"There are already several events added to the calendar for the month," Collins said. "We hope to see it filled with musicians, food specials and more at all of our downtown locations."

One event coming up for the month is *Fiesta de Reyes en Milford* at My Sister's Fault. This event celebrates the traditions of Epiphany on Jan. 6 from 10 a.m. to noon. It is designed for children aged 5 to 11 with crafts,

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games, music and storytime. My Sister's Fault is located at 10 Southwest Front Street in Milford. On Saturday, Jan. 13, the Milford Senior Center will hold a *Helping Hands Free Community Event* offering free items from clothing to shoes, hair cuts, food and more. The event is from 10 a.m. until noon at the Milford Senior Center, 111 Park Avenue and is sponsored by the Milford Advocacy for the Homeless.

Any organization who wishes to add their information to the community calendar can do so by emailing [big19963calendar@gmail.com](mailto:big19963calendar@gmail.com). Once approved, the event will be added to the calendar.

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## JOLLY TROLLY, MARGARITA CRAWL AMONG WINNERS OF TOURISM AWARDS

BY PAM GEORGE

Tourism is big business in Sussex County, DE, and the proof is in the numbers, according to Matt Parker, chair of [Southern Delaware Tourism](#) and a financial planner. In fiscal year 2023, Sussex County generated \$2.7 billion in visitor spending, he noted at the Annual Tourism Awards Luncheon, held Dec. 15 at [Lighthouse Cove Event Center](#) in Dewey Beach.

“This is real money and a real impact,” Parker told the room of tourism industry members and government officials.

“For every dollar spent, another \$1.20 goes right back into our local economy—dining out, going to the beach, camping, enjoying the great outdoors,” he continued. Moreover, tourism saves each Delaware \$1,608 in taxes a year, he added.

### Awards salute

The luncheon did more than toot tourism’s horn. It saluted movers and shakers who contribute to the county’s success. For instance, take Chef Dru Tevis, the keynote speaker, who is part of the number one visitor activity: dining. Tevis is the pastry chef for [SoDel Concepts](#), a Rehoboth Beach-based hospitality group with restaurants from Milford to Fenwick Island. The colorful chef garnered national attention last year when he won the “Holiday Baking Championship” on the [Food Network](#).

Tevis said he was proud of the area’s dining scene. “I know from personal experience that there’s nothing anyone else is doing in food across this whole country that we aren’t doing right here,” he said.

### Cheers, crabs and shorebirds

This year’s award winners exemplified the same passion and attention to detail. [Rehoboth Beach Main Street](#) collaborated with [Dano’s Tequila](#) to create the first Margarita Crawl, which received the Best New Event Award. The June 3, 2023, event included 15 restaurants offering two-ounce pours and complimentary appetizers. The event joins the Gumbo Crawl and Community Unity Dinner as a vital Rehoboth Beach Main Street fundraiser.

Meanwhile, the Best Event honoree started in 2000 as a distinctly Delaware festival. Organized by the [Milton Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Friends of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge](#), the [Horseshoe Crab & Shorebird Festival](#) attracted 7,000 local attendees from 15 states in 2022.

“This event, without a doubt, is a true economic driver, as well as a supreme tourist attraction...for southern Delaware,” said presenter Bonnie Hall, immediate past chair of Southern Delaware Tourism. The festival is on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend.

### Fun on wheels

Carol Everhart, a Southern Delaware Tourism board member and longtime president and CEO of the Rehoboth Beach-Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center, presented the Best Attraction Award.

“I’ll give you two clues: it rolls and is happy,” she said. “Got any ideas? How about Jolly Trolley?”

Everhart said the world’s original [Jolly Trolley](#), which started in 1970, was the first transportation service in Rehoboth and Dewey Beach.

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# GOVERNMENT & POLITICS



photo link: Marcia Reed

# CITY CHARTER CHANGES DISCUSSED AT WORKSHOP

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent workshop, Milford City Council discussed starting the process to update the city charter. According to City Solicitor David Rutt, the process takes some time and would likely not be completed until 2025.

“I don’t think that we’re going to do that, but Mr. Rutt, please let us know before we get run down the road somewhere,” Councilman Jason James said. “There may be things in there that are still relevant to how we conduct the city overall, but are there things that are in conflict with itself and other parts of the charter? There’s one charter that says one thing, but another says another thing because there are things in there that the council persons think the charter means this, but it really means something else. It needs clarity. I don’t know the answer to these things, but this is an open floor and there may be things that from the city manager or the city clerk’s position, may have recommendations to say this has been there, but it really needs to be cleaned up

because it really doesn’t make any sense.”

Councilman Todd Culotta questioned why the copy of the charter did not have edited text like in the past and Councilman James explained that there had been no changes at the present time. This meeting was simply to bring up areas where council felt the charter should be updated, changed or clarified. City Clerk Terri Hudson pointed out that the last time the city changed its charter, the process took two years. Since it was not long ago, she felt the changes would be relatively minor and only places that were glaringly incorrect.

“We spent a lot of time on the way it works now so we don’t have a registration process for voters within Milford. If you’re a registered voter in the state of Delaware, or you live in Milford you can vote in our election now,” Councilman Culotta said. “But there’s some language in there it still reads as though you have to be registered within the city.”

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Hudson explained that the language related to voter registration was left very generic when it was written. The language Councilman Culotta referred to in the charter simply stated that to vote in a city election, a resident had to be registered with the state 30 days prior to an election.

“And to just pick up on some comments that Terri made, we heard the amount of time it takes to make these things process through,” Councilman James said. “So, anything that is suggested tonight is not necessarily something that would take place next week or six months, one year. So, when I think about things of this nature, I think about things what is best for the city, not what’s best for a particular council person or particular office, what’s best for the city. That’s my perspective.”

Councilman James continued that he did have one charter change in mind.

“When I think about proposed charter changes, I do have one in mind that it may not be something that council has an appetite for, it may be so, but I did some research and I could be off, but most of the towns or cities in Delaware that are over 12,000 people and the number may be lower but more than more than 9,001, mostly northern towns, none of them have two year terms. They’re three or four,” Councilman James said. “And the mayor’s term does not always coincide with the council person’s term. In some cases, it does. In some cases, it doesn’t. The council may have three or four while the mayor may have two or less, I mean less than three or two. And my thinking is well why would they do that? As you grow, the number of legislative

things that you will address with a growing town or town a certain population can become more and more numerous and more and more impactful. So just think about it. And always assume that the council persons will go unchallenged and be in their seats for consecutive term. As more people come along, they’re probably will be more challenges in those races and the person has a two-year term.”

Councilman James felt that when someone is sworn in the first time, a two-year term can limit what they accomplish as the newly elected official spends the first year learning processes, the city code and other matters necessary to effectively manage the city. Although most council seats are held more than one term, with a two-year limit, it is possible someone could be voted out of the seat the second year. He also felt that staggering the mayor’s term might make more sense as well.

“I’ve had people complain over the years council people, about the fact that the mayor’s term always begins and ends with the same council and that has been a problem in the past,” City Clerk Hudson said. “So too, there should be a staggered term that would allow that term to end. And I had it figured out at one time. I can’t remember if it was three years or not. That would give council members the opportunity to run for mayor without impacting their own term.”

Mayor Archie Campbell recalled that when he first became mayor, moving from a council seat, he felt council seats should be three years, but recalled the request was voted down.

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“I think two years is a little too short. Because by the time, like Mr. James said, about the time you get acclimated to what’s going on, you’re out,” Mayor Campbell said. “So certain communities still are looking at three years. And correct me if I’m wrong, Terri, but if we make this kind of change that we have to go to the legislature.”

Solicitor Rutt stated that after all the charter changes are made at council level, a bill must be introduced in the General Assembly, starting with the House. It is then referred to a committee who holds hearings that require the city manager and city solicitor to attend. The last time the bill was presented, it was sponsored by Rep. Harvey Kenton. It then goes to the Senate and to the governor for signature.

“A lot of towns and municipalities are structured differently. In that you have one of the largest councils in the state with eight people on it which is a lot. Many just have one person from a district or an area and then they will elect the mayor from that group, or they don’t have a separate mayoral race. Millsboro is like that,” Solicitor Rutt said. “Yeah, a lot of towns are Georgetown is, Millsboro is I know, Lewes and we do have separate mayor in Bridgeville that elects from the town council, they will elect the mayor, and it can stagger so that in one year, for example, Mr. James, you would be mayor in the next year, even Mrs. Wilson. They have an organizational meeting where they can do that. It’s kind of messy. But it does happen. So, there are numerous variations that you could have on that. But, again, they have two-, three-year terms, four-year terms. There’s no more than four, nobody has five-year term.”

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# COUNCIL HEARS UPDATE ON FY22 AUDIT

BY TERRY ROGERS

City Finance Manager Lou Vitola provided council with an update on the FY22 audit. There has been a delay in completing the audit due to staffing issues in the finance department.

“Really, the report primarily demonstrates that at the core financials are in that final state. We’re working on the last state and materials for the audit. We can talk about results a little bit on a high level,” Vitola said. “One section is about \$2 million lighter at the end and that’s apples to apples with ARPA actually because we got that 2021, and then spent all of that \$1.2 and got that second fund right at the end of 2022, so that’s about but the difference.”

Utility and other funds were up, according to Vitola based on the audit report. He also pointed out that city investments were very strong, but that he was talking to the auditors about how he should handle any dip in the stock market which would have an impact on city fund-

ing. Throughout the process, Vitola stated he had learned a lot about the process.

“Now, that’s not to say that this is how long the final state will take. I can’t believe that I have to walk back what I said at the end of the process last year, which was, well it can’t get any worse than this. Even if it’s later than a normal process because of how they work, that wouldn’t be as bad as it was a year ago tonight and counsel. I stand here humbled by my staff. It’s just fabulous. I don’t want to make excuses. I’d like to say I think we’re just stretched unbelievably thin in the finance department. And we’ve got resources in place, onboarding training with a third-party contractor that was good but not great. There were some operating challenges that didn’t lend themselves to having it available as though, so that’s obviously the bad news,” Vitola said about the delay in completing the audit. “The

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downer is that we're here right now. Good news is that some of the other things we learned from the process last year, paves the way for significantly stronger product. I was building the financial statements backwards."

Vitola stated that the auditors had helped guide him through the process, providing him with details on how they viewed financials for government.

"But it looks wildly different than it used to look. So, there are tricks and tips and things to use to build those in a way that our current auditors prefer they be built, and we learned all that this year. There's was no statement by statement preparing the way we expected," Vitola said. "We have billing operations that operate miscellaneous receivables that are generated in the internal service fund the public works department when developments have been built, and we have to grant access to all these things. We also have little pockets the auditors are looking at that validate local city life. We looked at the pension multiple times because they compensated absences more than once. And many times, there was a philosophical disagreement between the production of backup."

Vitola explained that other steps had been put in place to help the audit process run more smoothly so the reports are completed in a timelier manner. Vitola said the process was a drain on him and his department, leading to some stress in other areas of the city finance department, but that he saw the light at the end of the tunnel.

"What impact does a delayed audit report have or are there any penalties, financial or otherwise, for not getting

the reports to those that rely on our financials for lending, regulatory purposes, whether it's governmental or private or banking or whatever have you," Councilman Jason James asked. "Are we okay? Because we're talking 22 and then we're going to get into 23, then 24."

Vitola stated that in some cases, audits were not required, but that as long as the city finances were strong and polices were in place, a delayed audit should not have much of an impact on the city's overall financial health. The only area where a delayed audit could have an impact is if a DEMEC customer, such as Middletown, requested financing where DEMEC members would need to provide financial information for loan grading, there may be some issue if Milford's audit were significantly delayed.

"We have an agreement amongst the members of DEMEC and one of the items in that agreement is that we shall provide an audited financial statement within six months at the end of the year. So, we do have a contractual obligation under DEMEC," Mark Whitfield, city manager, said. "I know DEMEC is very concerned over the fact that this could have an effect on their rating and they they've been told by I guess Moody's and S&P that the other side of that is Milford is not the only one that has not complied with this. There are two other municipalities that are kind of in the same boat that we are. However, we don't want to be that example. We want to get to the point where we are complying with the contract obligations as part of DEMEC."

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# HEALTH



photo link: Bayhealth



# BREAST CANCER SCREENING CRUCIAL TO BETTER OUTCOME

BY TERRY ROGERS

There is significant evidence that early detection is the best tool in fighting breast cancer, as cancers caught early are more likely to be localized. Unfortunately, breast cancer statistics indicate that there is a higher incidence of death among women of color, especially black women, who are diagnosed with breast cancer.

“Delaware ranks number one in black women diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), which is a more aggressive form of breast cancer,” Francesca Vogel, CEO of Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) said.

Research indicates that there has been a 43 percent decline in breast cancer deaths over the past 30 years due to more awareness of early detection, better treatments and other factors. Yet there is a mortality gap between black and white women. Although incidence rates are very close, black women have a 40 percent higher chance of dying of breast cancer and for black

women under 50, the statistics are much higher.

The reason for this disparity is complex and multifactorial, according to the American Cancer Society. Social, economic and behavioral factors are part of the issue leading to higher mortality rates. Black women also have a higher rate of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. They are also less likely to breastfeed after childbirth, all of which increase the risk of breast cancer. Lack of health insurance or access to healthcare facilities contribute to the higher mortality rate as well. There is also research from the National Institute of Health that black women may be predisposed to TNBC due to biology and not due to lack of screening or access to healthcare.

However, some of the discrepancy can also be due to biology, as black women have a higher rate of TNBC and inflammatory breast cancer. TNBC gets its name because it is a form of cancer that is estrogen and pro-

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gesterone receptor negative as well as HER2-negative. This means that the cancer does not respond to hormonal therapies in the same way as other types of cancer. About 10 to 12 percent of all breast cancers are TNBC and it tends to be more aggressive than other forms of breast cancer.

“Black women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with TNBC and are more likely to be diagnosed with a later-stage disease than white women,” Vogel said. “DBCC wants to change those statistics by increasing awareness of breast cancer risks through outreach and education as well as access to screenings by offering screenings to people who may not have access to them otherwise—even on weekends! The earlier we diagnose any type of cancer, the more likely there will be a good outcome. Another factor to point out is that it is not just women who can be diagnosed with breast cancer. Men are also at risk as one in 833 men are diagnosed with breast cancer every year according to the American Cancer Society.”

DBCC partners with the state of Delaware to offer centralized patient services for breast cancer. Vogel explained that DBCC is constantly pioneering and growing partnerships with providers, employers and even non-traditional partners to expand mammogram accessibility throughout the state.

“The women’s health screening team is embedded in the community, hospitals and community health fairs, they are here to help you connect the dots before, during and after your mammogram appointment,” Adriana Viveros-Sosa, program manager for Women’s Health Screening, said. “We serve with love and empower you though your mammogram journey.”

Vogel agreed with Viveros-Sosa, stating that the goal of DBCC was to help all men and women gain access to screenings and help them through their breast cancer journey. Remind someone you love to get schedule their mammogram today!

“We want to help patients navigate through the various cultural and economic barriers that exist,” Vogel said. “In some cases, it goes beyond economic factors, lack of insurance or transportation. For some, it is a cultural issue that makes women and men hesitant to undergo screening. We try to address as many barriers as we can, including increased details about screenings, signage, scheduling transportation to help transport to/from screenings, to helping someone to a screening or follow-up appointment. DBCC navigators provide in Spanish as well as Haitian Creole to move past the language barriers that are also a barrier to screening.”

In February, DBCC hopes to reach out to another group who may not have access to screenings.

“We will be hosting an event with CAMP Rehoboth called “Love Yourself Self-Care Event,” which focuses on getting our LGBTQ+ community screened in a safe space,” Vogel said. “Our goal is to offer breast/chest screenings at CAMP Rehoboth, a well-known safe space for members of the LGBTQ community to get what could be a lifesaving screening.”

The mission of DBCC is to empower the community by raising awareness of breast health issues and increasing access to care through outreach, education and support services, while also facilitating early detection and treatment of breast cancer. Learn more about the

[Women’s Health Screening Program.](#) 



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# POLICE & FIRE



photo credit: Milford Police Department



# POLICE CHIEF REQUESTS ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL

BY TERRY ROGERS

At a recent finance committee meeting, Police Chief Cecilia Ashe requested four additional dispatchers and one crime analyst be added to the department. This request came after Chief Ashe conducted a staffing needs assessment soon after she was hired. Two of the dispatchers would be hired immediately with the remaining two added to the FY25 budget.

“Upon a preliminary review of staffing, it was glaring that the communications center was understaffed and cost-saving measures could be put in place to run this division more efficiently,” Chief Ashe wrote in a memo to the committee. “The current make up creates a serious issue if an employee calls out sick or takes vacation as it will only leave one employee to handle all communications center responsibilities.”

Chief Ashe continued that the dispatch center for MPD also handled calls for electric outages as well as flooding during storm events. Should those events occur, it is estimated the MPD dispatchers handle more than 100 calls while also dispatching and monitoring

police action throughout town. Chief Ashe explained that when a dispatcher calls in sick or requests vacation, another dispatcher must work overtime, or they must rely on part-time dispatchers who are not always available. The new personnel to be added immediately would place one additional dispatcher on each shift, allowing for three dispatchers on any given shift. If funding allows in the FY25 budget, Chief Ashe would like to add two more which would create a four-person dispatch shift. The cost of four new dispatchers would total \$266,700 per year, although it may be possible to share costs among utilities.

“In addition, I am requesting authorization to hire a full-time crime analyst with the intent to fill this position within the next 60 days,” Chief Ashe continued. “I am requesting this position to move into the next phase of our Strategic Plan as well as the ability to receive grant funding to help offset some of the cost.”

Chief Ashe explained that the city is currently applying for grant funding through the Delaware Criminal

Justice Council to fund additional personnel within the Behavioral Health Unit. As part of the grant, they hope to receive funding that would offset the cost of the crime analyst who would be able to track and monitor with more detail and precision the success and gaps within the Behavioral Health Unit. The cost of the crime analyst was estimated at \$99,929 per year. Finance Committee Chairman Councilman Jason James asked Finance Director Lou Vitola to explain what impact these requests would have on the FY24 and FY 25 budget.

“When there is a new initiative or a new expense in the general fund that’s ongoing into the future, it can’t be funded with capital because capital is not sustainable. It’s got to be funded with recurring annual operating revenues of the general fund. And while utility transfers meet that definition, they can’t be changed to meet the needs of the general fund,” Vitola explained regarding using utility funds to cover the cost of the additional staff. “They are what they are. We could be in a situation where we have commercial a commercial electric sector that would be dumping an extra \$10 million a year into the general fund and we could have a long sovereign great general fund, but it’s driven entirely by the electric fund and its attributes themselves. Just because we have additional needs in the general fund that are unfunded, that doesn’t merit additional pulls from the utility funds, because that could put the utility funds in peril and drive up rates.”

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