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photo link: [Second Street Players](#)



Middle School Finalist Names



City to Get \$63,000 Rebate



Parks & Rec Spring Sports



HEADLINES



photo link: Tatiana Akinfieva Dance Academy



NEW MILFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL HAS FOUR FINALISTS FOR NAME CHANGE

BY JAREK RUTZ

The new Milford middle school, a key component of **Milford School District's** strategic plan to accommodate rapid enrollment growth, will soon be getting a formal name. The school, under construction at 612 Lakeview Avenue in Milford, is expected to open in fall 2024. It is part of the five-year Milford School District, adopted in 2023.

The district is growing by roughly 150 students a year, and over a few years, that translates to the population of a normal elementary school, said board member Matt Bucher.

“That puts us in a position where we’re going to have to make some decisions rather quickly,” Bucher said.

The nine-person naming committee took the following components into consideration when coming up with names: grade configurations long-term, commu-

nity and history, and already established commemorative and historical items. Milford’s Strategic Plan was established in 2023 and will last until 2028.

In the district’s board of education meeting Feb. 26, Sara Hale, district chief operating officer, presented the four finalists:

- Lakeview Avenue Intermediate School
- Lakeview Intermediate School on the Milford Eleven Campus
- Milford Schelhouse School (M.S.S.)
- Marvin P. Schelhouse School

Marvin Schelhouse was a longtime Milford resident who died in September 2022. He graduated from Milford High School in 1955 and then joined the Marine Corps in 1956, serving for 21 years. After retiring from the Marine Corps, he moved with his family back to

Milford and began working for the state Department of Labor for over 20 years. He was also a member of the Milford School District Board of Education for more than 30 years, serving as president multiple times.

Hale said the names were a combination of the top choices from the committee as well as names that were strongly advocated for by the community.

“We understand that it is the ultimate decision of the board,” she said, “so if the board would like us to reconvene or to take feedback, we can certainly do so, but these are the names that we are presenting.”

The board wanted clarification on the grades the school would serve and if having the word “intermediate” in the name is appropriate.

“Technically the grades five and six are considered an intermediate school,” Hale said. “We are cautious to include intermediate or early childhood or some sort of title designating those grade-spans, not knowing over the next few years of our district how that will look.”

The board emphasized the need for the name to be timeless and able to last the length of the building regardless of if the district restructures what grades attend. It is unclear when the board needs to vote on the name.

Grade reconfiguration

The district is reshuffling which grades will go into each school starting in the 2025-2026 school year, which is the year the new middle school opens.

Currently, the district is structured pre-K and kindergarten together, grades one through five together, grades six through eight together and grades nine through 12 together.

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When the new middle school opens, the district will shift to kindergarten through grade four at its four elementary schools (Morris Early Childhood Center, now serving pre-K and kindergarten, will become the fourth elementary school), grades five and six at the new middle school, grades seven and eight at Milford Central Academy, and grades nine through 12 at Milford High School.

Bucher said it isn't finalized, but it's expected that each elementary school will have pre-K offerings once Morris transitions from an early childhood center to an elementary school.




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MAYOR: NO VOTE ON HOMELESS VILLAGE, BUT IT WON'T BE DOWNTOWN

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

A decision has not been made on whether to allow a homeless village and will not be made until there is a solid operational plan that does not include taxpayer dollars, Milford's mayor said last week. Operating money and creating a task force to look at the issue, was one of several comments about a proposed village of tiny houses during the Feb. 28th City Council workshop.

The council also heard or discussed:

- Joyce and Mark Nauman, who live just outside town limits, complain that the council had reclassified part of their farm as open space without their knowledge or permission. They thought it had something to do with the council's plans for expanding parks and bike paths.

- The results of a study about converting the city's vehicle fleet to electric. It would be possible for about 74% of the city's vehicles, the study said. Some vehicles would be too expensive to retrofit and would need to be replaced at the end of their usefulness.
- Interest in the old police station from the Milford Museum as a new home, but warnings from their lawyer that they cannot allow a private purchase until the site had been offered to other government agencies.

City take on the village

Mayor Archie Campbell said he heard things about the city's involvement with the tiny house village that he couldn't believe.

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“I hear so many rumors. I don’t know why everyone is up in arms and they don’t have the whole story. We’re not going to raise taxpayer dollars to help the homeless,” Campbell said. “Everyone is out there talking, talking, talking and it doesn’t make much sense. Nothing’s been decided. Everyone needs to stop with the rumors and listen to what the council is saying.”

If the city does decide to go ahead with the project, the public shouldn’t worry about it being downtown, said Council member Daniel Marabello.

“We worked a long time to improve the downtown district,” Marabello said.

“If anything,” Campbell said, “maybe we lease property somewhere.” He reminded the room that two farmers outside Milford offered their property as lease options.

Council Member Jason James suggested forming a task force to create a comprehensive plan for the homeless issue and raise community awareness and understanding of the homeless situation.

Council member Andy Fulton said the city should consider putting the issue on a ballot for direct voter input before deciding which direction to go.

That would have some of the people speaking during the night’s public comment segment.

Any of those decisions are likely to push any official vote on the homeless village beyond the April election.

Public comment on village

Renee Edie told the council that if the city chose to allow the homeless village, it should be on the outskirts of town.

“Lewes wouldn’t allow this. Milton wouldn’t allow it. Neither would Rehoboth,” Edie said. “Why are we doing it? Do something different.”

She said she hoped the council learned to take into account public opinion after the eminent domain case against Annette Billings was dropped last week due to public outcry against the council’s actions.

“Don’t do it because the townspeople are going to come right back at you again,” Edie warned the council.

Social worker Julie Morris said the Springboard Village is not a good idea because the residents won’t have access to adequate medical and mental health services, job opportunities and public transportation are limited, and the village will become a burden for the police force.

“Putting this type of housing here will make Milford more of a permanent location for the homeless,” Morris said. “And if we’re talking about permanent housing and support for the homeless and these populations, I’m all about it. But not this.”


Lucius Webb expressed concern about the village’s ability to address homelessness due to insufficient funding and the ongoing lack of affordable, subsidized housing options for low-income residents.

“Pallet villages are due to fail,” Webb said, “unless there’s a place these people can hope to go to that is affordable.” The real costs need to be assessed, as did the will of the people, he said.

Farmland conversion

Joyce and Mark Nauman, who live just outside town limits, said they were upset that the city had reclassified

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from page 6

their property, apparently for its comprehensive plan for bike paths and parks. The Naumans, who said they are not against parks, said the city should not have rezoned their property from residential to open space.

“This property is not an open space, it is our home. It’s our farm,” Joyce said. “We do acknowledge that the park and pass system could happen. But it does not need to include our parcel.”

She said the city of Milford did not contact her or her husband, nor inform them of the zoning ordinance details. “Why would the city pass an ordinance to change zoning without reaching out to us first?” Joyce questioned. “What was their ulterior motive in changing the zoning without notification? The city has automatically devalued our property. And again, you have to ask who benefits.”

Since their property is outside Milford, the couple cannot vote or run for elected town positions, yet their property could be taken by Milford through eminent domain, she said.

“We cannot help but wonder, did the city pass the ordinance to devalue our property in order that they could eventually take it or perhaps other properties. too,” Joyce concluded.

UPDATE: The city changed the future land use of the Nauman’s property to open space in the Comp Plan. No zoning change has been made. The Comp Plan can be changed, but is designed to let the public see how the city wants to see land used in the future.

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Electric Vehicles

The results of a consultant study on transitioning Milford's vehicle fleet from gasoline to electric power over the course of three to 12 years was also discussed at the workshop. The feasibility study included 100 vehicles and mowers eligible for funding through Energize Delaware, a nonprofit helping governments convert.

Of the 74 light-duty vehicles, three-quarters were identified as candidates for transition to electric vehicles. The estimated annual fuel costs currently for each gas vehicle is \$10,000, while projected fuel for each electric vehicle would be \$3,000 per year.

According to the study, if Milford replaced 29 gas-powered vehicles with electric equivalents, the projected savings would be an estimated \$75,000 in lifetime costs. Vehicles identified in the study to have lower total cost of ownership compared to gas or diesel vehicles include Chevy Bolts, Ford F-150 and electric John Deere gators vehicles.

The study found that an electric garbage truck would not be financially viable for electric conversion due to high upfront cost.

To avoid financial burden, replacing gas vehicles with electric ones should be done as each is retired from the fleet, said City Manager Mark Whitfield.

Installing up to 53 charging station ports over 3 to 12 years to support electric vehicles with dedicated ports for each vehicle would optimize charging, according to the study. Funding opportunities, such as Energize Delaware grants, could support the addition of electric vehicles to Milford's fleet with little to no cost.

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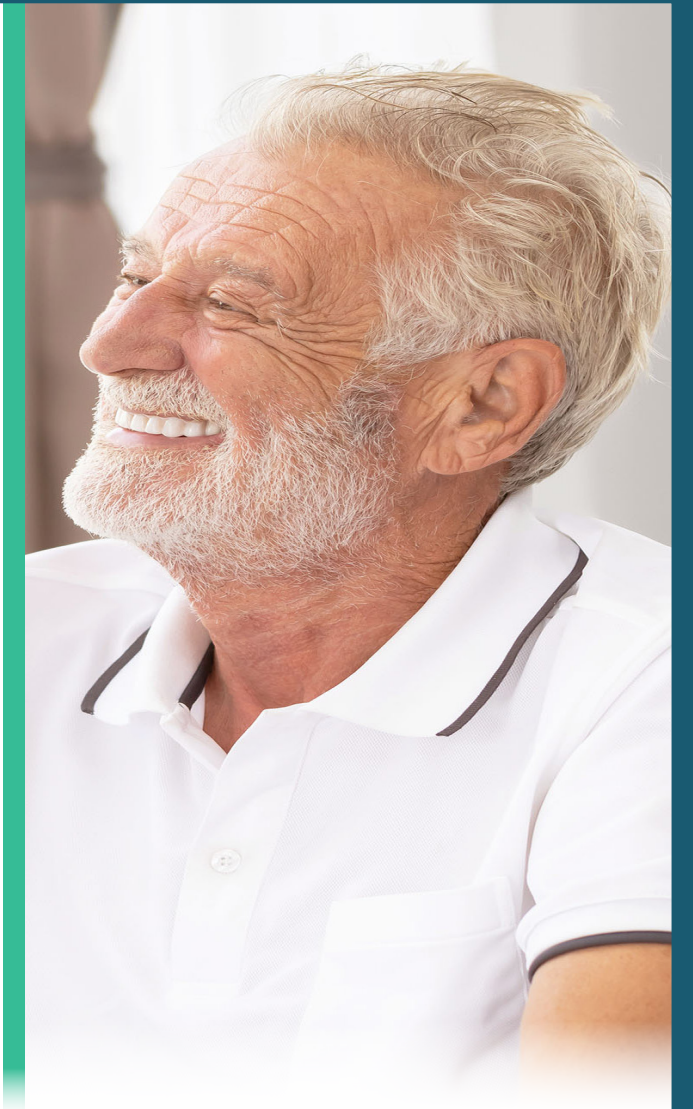
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CULTURE



photo link: [Second Street Players](#)



MILFORD ROTARY CLUB TO OFFER SEVEN SCHOLARSHIPS, TWO RENEWALS

BY TERRY ROGERS

The Milford Rotary Club Educational Foundation will offer seven scholarships to 2024 high school students in the greater Milford area, and two scholarship renewals. New this year is a \$2,500 scholarship for a student studying for a job in the trades.

“We recognize that community college offers trade education, but they do not cover all the costs,” said Jim O’Neil, the foundation’s co-coordinator. “We felt this \$2,500 supplement would be a nice supplement.” It will be named the Donovan Trade Training Scholarship, after business owner and longtime Rotarian Jack Donovan.

Another change to the scholarships offered is that applications can now be completed online rather than requiring applicants to download forms, fill them out and mail them in. Foundation Coordinator Robin Sirkis was instrumental in making this change so it’s easier for students to apply.

The club will be offering \$21,500 in scholarships in

2024. That will include six \$2,500 scholarships and renewing two \$2,000 scholarships. They include:

- A Rotary Traditional scholarship
- A Rotary Interact Scholarship
- A Rotary Service Above Self Scholarship
- A Rotary Preserverance Scholarship
- A Rotary Warnell Scholarship, named for the late Joseph Warnell, a longtime Rotarian, chemist and former business owner.
- The Dr. William Warren Scholarship, in memory of the late Dr. Warren, a longtime foundation trustee.

In addition, the renewals will be for the Garbutt Family Trust Scholarship, valued at \$2,000 each and named in honor of the late Thomas Garbutt, his wife, Marie, and daughter, Gail.

Funding for the scholarships comes from sponsors for the Rotary Flags of Heroes fundraiser and donations from Rotary members.

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*Students must meet eligibility requirements. Course fees and books are not covered by the SEED Scholarship.

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All scholarship applications are judged on the criteria of the student's leadership, character and citizenship, academic achievement and the quality of an original essay, but each scholarship may have additional specific requirements. All scholarship applicants must reside in the service area of the Milford Rotary Club, which includes all of the Milford School District.

Graduating seniors in public, charter, parochial or private schools or home-schooled seniors must submit applications by April 20, 2024. Children and grandchildren of Milford Rotary Club members are not eligible.

Applications are now available at www.milfordrotaryclub.com. For questions about the website applications, contact Robin Sirkis at robinsirkis1@gmail.com.



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LIBRARY TO OFFER LINE DANCING, HISTORY TALK, MEDICAL TESTING

BY TERRY ROGERS

The month of March at the Milford Public Library is filled with fun events, some designed to get your body moving and others to move your mind. The month begins with free line dancing with Lisa.

“This is a great way to have fun and exercise at the same time,” said Carolyn Tabor, program coordinator at the library. The free classes will be held every Wednesday from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. in the Lions Club A and B Rooms. They end March 28.

On March 5, from 1 to 4 p.m., AmeriHealthCaritas Delaware Mobile Wellness Unit will offer free blood pressure and BMI screenings for anyone who is interested. Free dental exams also will be available with on-the-spot assistance plus dental referrals.

“This program will include free cholesterol, HgA1C and lead testing for AmeriHealthCaritas members in

Delaware,” Tabor said. “The library will be handing out free health and wellness-related educational material plus holding giveaways throughout this important event.”

A history mystery will be the topic of the American History Series offered by the Milford Museum with “The Disappearance of Amelia Earhart” March 9 in Lions Rooms A and B at 1 p.m.

“Amelia Earhart has been missing for 87 years and has become an American icon,” Tabor said. “This program will provide some of the truth behind the legend. Ric Gillespie, author of the new book ‘One More Good Flight: The Amelia Earhart Tragedy,’ will talk about the many myths and misconceptions about Earhart. He will also provide evidence of her true fate, discovered during TIGHAR’s 34-years of scientific investigation.”

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Gillespie’s book is soon to be published by the Naval Institute Press in Annapolis.

The final March program will be on the 12th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when the Community Health Services Sussex County Mobile Unit will offer a variety of testing. That will include HIV testing, counseling and referral; COVID-19 vaccinations and testing; blood lead screening; diabetes screening; and blood pressure readings. No appointment is necessary. Walk-ins are welcome.

For more information about library programs, visit its [website](#).

MILFORD
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BUSINESS



photo link: [Marcia Reed](#)

SLIP INTO 1920S WITH CURED PLATE'S UNIQUE DINING EXPERIENCE

BY PETER OSBORNE

Servers wearing 1920s attire. Light-up menus. Customer-designed charcuterie boards. **The Cured Plate**, which opened Feb. 13, is providing one of the most unique dining experiences in the area and it's proven popular with diners in the region.

The charcuterie-based restaurant, which sources locally, has not had an empty seat since the doors opened and customers are posting rave reviews on social media.

"For most people, this is an experience that you have never had in your life. It's NOT like a regular restaurant. It's very small, but very doable, very soft, low lighting! It's a cozy, 'chill' atmosphere," Cheryl Satterfield Nash posted after her first visit. "Everything is very unique. A terrific place for some good conversation. I expect this place to be a real hit in Milford. My guess is, they'll have to find a bigger space, because this idea is so great for

this town."

Nash was not alone in her praise.

"Love the vibe it gives off and the food was amazing," Joey Shipley commented. "Definitely can see the time and effort put in to present the food, very unique experience and will definitely be back! Fell in love with the place as soon as I walked in."

Upon entering the new restaurant, guests are greeted by staff wearing 1920s attire. The restaurant is small with several cocktail-style tables in the center that seat two, sofas on each wall with seating for between four and six, plus two U-shaped tables in the front for eight.

It's dark in the restaurant because the owners wanted to keep it in the style of a 1920s speakeasy and those were "hidden" from the government during Prohibi-

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tion. To help diners adjust to the darkness, each table or seating area has individual lights that can be adjusted for those who need more lighting.

As a bonus, when the menus open, they light up, providing additional illumination.

The menu includes appetizers such as baked brie, mac and cheese skillet, stuffed dates and more. Entrees include two cheese boards which can be built for two (\$50), four or six people. The Cured Plate sources local meat and cheeses for the boards.

There are also salmon or chicken skewers, Buffalo mac and cheese, chicken and waffles along with other options.

Each charcuterie board is custom made with guests choosing from cheeses, meats and jams. The boards are works of art with meats arranged in the shape of roses, grapes positioned perfectly and additional items like candied nuts sprinkled throughout.

Entrees are well proportioned as well. It can be pricey with charcuterie starting at \$45 for the board for two. However, the entrees are moderately priced, ranging from \$22 to \$28. There are even options for children and sides can be added to any entrée, including roasted broccolini or a baked potato bowl.

A small bar in the lounge seats eight. The bar is limited to specific liquors, like Uncle Nearest Whiskey, in keeping with the 1920s theme. They do offer a small selection of beer, including Dogfish and Michelob Ultra. The wine selection is also topnotch. However, when visiting, guests may want to consider some of the unique specialty cocktails designed after those popular in the 1920s.

“We’ve spent years researching and taste testing to bring the best of an era,” said co-owner Liz Klingensmith. “We have artfully created cocktails that represent the Prohibition era and our signature selection is solely based on that time period.”

The Cured Plate recommends reservations and for the time being, they must be made by phone by calling 302-242-0487. The owners hope to eventually offer online reservations. Walk-ins are accommodated if there’s availability.


Find the restaurant at 27 S. Walnut Street, Suite 103, in downtown Milford. It’s open Wednesday and Thursday from 4 to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 4 to 11 p.m. and is closed Sunday through Tuesday.




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BY TERRY ROGERS

Downtown Milford Inc. recently changed its popular Third Thursday events to First Friday, partly because Friday kicks off the weekend and most adults are aren't working Saturday and children are out of school. Third Thursdays began as a way to encourage more people to visit, shop and dine downtown.

"Although we found that Third Thursday was a great way for people to see what our amazing downtown has to offer," said Sara LeBright, interim executive director of DMI, "looking at what works best for our community and our businesses seemed to indicate a Friday event was a better option."

First Fridays will begin May 3 and run through Oct. 4. Third Thursday events have been themed with activities related to "Christmas in July," "Fire and Ice,"

DMI SHIFTS THIRD THURSDAY TO FIRST FRIDAY

"Superheroes," "Dog Days of Summer," and more. This year, DMI will focus on bringing unique activities downtown, including a kids zone, games and specials offered in downtown businesses.

"The main reason for First Friday is to highlight how special our downtown is," LeBright said. "So many people, even those who live in our town, are unaware of the wonderful things happening."

LeBright said at least 10 new businesses have opened in the downtown area during the past year.

"The Cured Plate, a speakeasy-themed charcuterie restaurant, and Stewart's Freeze Dried Goodies are just two of the fun places we have downtown now," LeBright said. "We have The Farmacy, fondue, Irish Rose, Junebugs, BabyBugs, Shock Vinyl, Maggie's Antiques and Friends, Blooming Boutique and Studio You."

DMI is looking for volunteers to help plan and manage First Friday events. Those interested should go to the DMI Volunteers [Facebook](#) page.

For more information, go to the Downtown Milford Inc. website, email promotions@downtownmilford.org or call 302-839-1180.





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photo link: Marcia Reed



MILFORD MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL RACES ALL HAVE TWO CANDIDATES

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Every incumbent in Milford’s April 27 city elections will face opposition. Mayor Arthur J. Campbell’s city seat is being contested by Todd Culotta, now a council member representing Ward 2. Campbell beat Culotta six years ago, the only time Campbell has faced competition for the position.

Mike J. Boyle of Ward 1 will run against by Diamanto Kalesis, owner of Westside Restaurant. Ward 2 has two nominees, Nadia Zychal and Lori Connor. Ward 3 has two fresh faces vying for the council seat — Danny G. Perez and Michael Stewart. Incumbent Brian Baer is not listed as filing to run again.

Finally, after representing Ward 4 for more than 30 years, Katrina E. Wilson will face off against Phillip H. Ruiz.

Election rules

The election will be April 27. Voting will take place between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the City Public Works Facility, 180 Vickers Drive, Greater Milford Business

Park. Individuals with a Milford address who are registered to vote in Delaware by March 28 are eligible to vote. Residents who need to register may contact the Department of Elections, Sussex County Office at 302-856-5367. Registration can also be completed [HERE](#).

Qualified non-resident property owners voting also must be registered in the city of Milford by March 28. Questions about voter eligibility, registering to vote or absentee ballots should go to the city clerk’s office at 302-422-1111, extension 1142 or 1303, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. If no one answers, please leave your name, phone number and a message. The final deadline to mail absentee documents is Tuesday, April 23 at 4:30 p.m.

Only non-residents whose properties are deeded in their individual names are eligible to vote in Milford elections. Identification will be required of all voters.



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CITY TO GET \$63,000 REBATE ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONTRACT

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Money was a frequent topic at this week's Milford City Council meeting. The council heard that the city will get a \$60,000-plus return on a three-year contract it paid Efficiency Smart and that the city's customer service department brought in \$51 million during the last fiscal year.

The council voted to renew the city's contract with Efficiency Smart effective March 1. Efficiency Smart is a non-profit organization based in Ohio that works with municipal electric companies, such as Delaware Municipal Electric Coop, to reduce electric load by offering incentives, rebates and advice to customers.

Tom Coyle, district manager of the program, said the town paid Efficiency Smart \$341,000 in a three-year contract, which saved the town \$2.2 million in electric costs.

"Our contract with Efficiency Smart sets goals that are to be met by Efficiency Smart in reducing the city's electric load," said City Manager Mark Whitfield.

If Efficiency Smart does not meet the goals laid out, they are obligated to give money back to the city. Efficiency Smart will owe the city of Milford a rebate of more than \$63,000 due to not meeting the peak summer hours usage goal. The rebate will go back into the city's electric fund and will be used to offset costs within the electric department.

Customer service

Suzannah Frederick, director of Milford's customer service department, said \$51 million was brought in by her team during the last completed fiscal year. She said the department is fully staffed with five clerks, including two who speak Spanish.

Since the city implemented the ability for customers to pay over the phone this year, Frederick said 2,100 such payments have been made. These phone payments have resulted in less disconnections for unpaid accounts, particularly for accounts receiving collection calls.



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Other items

- Whitfield will be getting a 3% raise based on performance after a unanimous council vote of approval Feb. 26.
- The city will pay \$500,000 for a new fire truck for the Carlisle Fire Co. "The fire truck business obviously isn't cheap," said president Louis Sachs.
- Sachs also announced that fire company member Steve Ellingsworth was named Kent County Volunteer Firefighter of the Year, recognizing his 50 years of service. "Stevie has stepped up through many, many years on our financial committee and makes sure that we're being fiscally responsible," Sachs said.



JOHN MOLLURA

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EDUCATION



photo link: [Milford School District](#)

STUDENT-DIRECTED LEARNING DAYS GET THUMBS DOWN IN MILFORD

BY JAREK RUTZ

A proposed way to teach through “self-directed student learning time” was met with criticism from several members of the **Milford School District**. Four of those learning days were proposed in the 2024-2025 academic year calendar presented to the district’s school board during its monthly meeting Feb. 26.

“I’m not an educator but I am a parent,” said Board President Scott Fitzgerald. “I don’t think they’re going to be self-learning those days. You might call it that, but I think they’re going to call that a day off.”

The thought behind the idea was that it’s one way for teachers to meet their contractual time to grade papers and exams, catch up on planning, engage in professional development and more.

“We had envisioned that a student’s self-directed learning day would be where students were at home doing

learning at home, and we would provide tools for them to be working on projects that would be self-directed,” said Kelly Carvahal-Hageman, the district’s chief academic officer. The days could be used for professional learning time, she said, and allow staff to analyze data and create action plan.

Carvahal-Hageman said details about exactly what students would be doing needed to be worked out, but they would be working on projects, reading, writing and a variety of activities that would be prepared in advance. Other districts do similar things in their calendar, she said, but she did not name any.

School Board member Matt Bucher said he doesn’t know of any specific districts doing exactly what Milford is proposing, but this type of learning is a new aspect some schools are considering.

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FEBRUARY 26	MORRIS EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER 8609 Third St., Lincoln
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APRIL 15	MISPILLION ELEMENTARY 311 Lovers Lane, Milford
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Carvahal-Hageman said Milford’s students are capable of doing work at home and if the district structures the time appropriately, it will be productive. Board members expressed concern that the arrangement could create challenges for working parents.

Board member Adam Brownstein said the days should instead be labeled “students off.”

“You will have select students that will engage in those activities appropriately,” he said, “but they are probably the students that would be least needed to engage in said activities because those will be the kids that are already over-achieving.”

In an era when all Delaware’s districts are struggling to meet student demands and essentially failing, he said, schools provide enough hours in the day to try to give children the best possible chance to succeed and learn.

Carvahal-Hageman said expectations dictate results. If the expectations are there, she said, the self-directed days can be successful.

“You would be surprised by what kids are able to do when we set really high expectations for them, and when you make really interesting and engaging things for them to work on,” she said. “I’m not going to say that there’s 100% participation, but there it is an opportunity for a different kind of learning that can happen...There is value in trying something different.”

Bucher said it’s on the administration to make the calendar more useful to the student.

“I can’t see how slicing four days off and sending students home frees up the teacher to grade papers,” he said. “If it’s a home directive, what is the teacher doing?

Are they just taking a day to grade papers? Is that what the teacher will be doing while the student is self-directed learning?”

Teachers would be collaboratively scoring their student work, Carvahal-Hageman said, and they have required time at the end of every marking period for record-keeping, which includes grading, entering grades into the data systems and more.

She said self-learning days are definitely a different idea, but the district can continue to do the same if the board doesn’t want the change.

The school board asked for a revised draft of the calendar for its March 18 meeting. Its members can approve the revised calendar in that meeting or April’s, but it must be approved by May.

Also at the Feb. 26th meeting, the board voted to increase the pay of substitute school nurses from \$200 to \$250, a 25% raise. Sara Hale, district chief operating officer, said the district typically has two or three substitute nurses that do the majority of coverage, but the district is always looking for substitutes in every employee group.



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SPORTS



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MILFORD PARKS AND RECREATION ANNOUNCES SPRING SPORTS

BY TERRY ROGERS

With the weather heating up, thoughts naturally turn to outdoor recreation, and Milford Parks and Recreation is ready to help people “spring” into action with their recently announced seasonal sport lineup.

“We will bring back some of our most popular sports,” said Brad Dennehy, director of Parks and Recreation.

Outdoor soccer, flag football and field hockey are always popular, he said. “Those will return again this year,” he said. “We are even offering a Tiny Tykes session for the little ones this year to introduce them to sporting activities.”

Tiny Tykes begins April 11 and runs through May 9 at the Milford Boys and Girls Club. Designed for children ages 3 and 4, the program teaches basic motor skills that are used in a variety of sports. Parents also may get some

exercise out of this. They are required to be present and active with their children, helping them with preset drills led by an instructor. The program is offered Thursdays from 5 to 5:45 p.m. and costs \$50 per child.

A girls’ basketball league will run from April 8 through May 23. Two leagues are available, one for ages 8 to 12 and another for ages 13 to 17. The 8 to 12 league practices Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with games held on Wednesdays. The 13 to 17 league practices on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. with games on Thursday. The cost is \$60 per participant.

The city will expand its pickleball offerings this year. “Pickleball is quickly growing as one of the country’s most popular sports,” Dennehy said. “Our new pickleball courts in Memorial Park are constantly busy with

players.” A new Milford Pickleball League for those 15 and older will have games on Monday from 6 to 8 p.m. on the Memorial Park courts. Individual fees are \$30 per person while team fees are \$60.

Outdoor soccer is one of the largest programs offered by Parks and Recreation with four age group leagues in place. Evaluations will be held Tuesday, March 5, and Thursday, March 7. On March 5, evaluations for those ages 7-8 as well as ages 9-10 will be from 5 to 6. On March 7, ages 11 to 14 will be evaluated from 5 to 6 p.m.

The season will run from April 9 through June 28 at the Milford Boys and Girls Club. The cost for outdoor soccer for children ages 5 and 6, whose games are played on Tuesdays from 5 to 5:45 p.m. is \$50. This is an instructional league. The 7- to 8-year-old league play on Tuesdays from 6 to 7 p.m. The cost is \$60 per player.

Both leagues play on the small field at Tony Silicato Park. The 9- and 10-year-old league play on Tuesdays from 5 to 5:45 p.m. and 11- to 14-year-old league plays on Tuesdays from 6 to 7 p.m., both on the large field. The cost for both leagues is \$60 per player.

“We are pleased to offer flag football again this year,” Dennehy said. “Clinics are held Thursday evenings from 5 to 6 p.m. We do encourage mouth guards for players and our coaches are well-versed in concussion protocol as a precaution in all of our sports programs.”

The flag football season begins April 11 and runs through May 23. Games are played on Thursday from 5 to 6 p.m. in Marvel Square. The program is designed for children aged 7 to 13. The cost for the program is \$75 per child.

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Field hockey runs from April 7 through June 2 with games played at the Milford High School lower turf field. Designed for children aged 7 to 12, the cost is \$75.

“Tennis is also getting a lot of attention in Milford these days,” Dennehy said. “For this reason, we are offering two programs, a beginner and an intermediate. We welcome new coaches Jay Johnson and Anne Carroll, who will lead our beginner’s class. This program teaches the fundamentals of the game with a focus on having fun.”

Clinics are held Monday and Wednesdays from May 1 to June 5 from 5 to 6 p.m. The cost is \$60 per person and open to those aged 7 and older. The intermediate tennis clinics run from May 1 to June 5 from 6 to 7 p.m. Both the beginner and intermediate programs are held at Milford High School.

For more information, contact Milford Parks and Recreation at 302-422-6616, extension 6 or go [HERE](#) to register online.



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POLICE & FIRE



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FEDERAL GRANT WILL PUT MORE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OFFICERS ON ROAD

BY KATIE KAZIMIR

Milford police will move closer to having a Behavioral Health Unit staff on the job after receiving a \$363,000 federal grant. Behavior Health officers ride along with police officers and are trained to handle mental health issues.

“That’s the thing that leaves me up at night, making sure that we can cover seven days a week. Maybe not 24 hours. We can move towards that,” Chief Cecelia Ashe said during the Feb. 26th Milford Public Safety Committee meeting.

The city has 37 officers on its force, but only one full-time behavioral health director who primarily works Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4 pm, and two contracted part-time mental health clinicians who provide an additional 40 hours of coverage.

The grant was received from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance: Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program through the state of Delaware Criminal Justice Council.

“With this new grant we will be able to increase our coverage to seven days a week by adding additional hours to our two existing part-time clinicians as well as adding two more part-time clinicians,” said Milford Police Public Information Officer Sgt. Timothy Maloney.

The department also has received a \$175,000 grant to buy electric vehicles and chargers to be installed at the back of the police station, Ashe said. This grant was received from Energize Delaware, a nonprofit that promotes the use of electric vehicles in county and local governments. The grant will help the department add two Ford F-150 Lightnings and one Ford Mustang Mach E to their fleet.

“These vehicles are subject to change based on availability from the manufacturer,” said Maloney.

Also included in this grant are the addition of EV charging stations at the new police headquarters at a minimum cost to the city.

“Currently, we have 45 vehicles (including our two motorcycles) in the fleet,” Maloney said. “We have implemented a vehicle replacement program, so that when we acquire new vehicles we are decommissioning older vehicles in the fleet.”

Prior to Ashe’s tenure with the department, there was no defined replacement program for the department’s fleet. Within the last year, the department acquired the necessary vehicles to complete the implementation of the Take Home Vehicle Program, as well as a replacement program for the department’s fleet.

Ashe also reported Feb. 26 that the department saved almost \$40,000 this year on new uniforms. Around \$1,200 per staff member was cut from costs by switching from uniforms custom made specifically for each officer to ones “off the shelf” that can be altered to fit and be reused. The new uniforms were funded through a \$11,000 grant from the state and are more form fitting, with vests that better hold officers’ equipment, she said.

“The old vests were really a concern of the officers from a public safety perspective,” Ashe said, because the hanging equipment could be easily grabbed by a person resisting arrest.

In addition to exploring more cost-cutting strategies and grant options, Ashe said a focus for the department this year is community engagement. Coffee With a Cop and Fishing with Kids are new events aimed at helping officers and the community connect, Ashe said.

The Milford Police Department’s annual budget is \$6.5 million.

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