

Friends of Delaware Libraries Board Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2026 (via Zoom) – Approved 6/8/2026

Meeting Overview

Present: *Vivian Erickson, Tiffany Lydon, Marlene Biddinger, Kay Bowes, Mary Chute, Skip Dye, Sue Gooden, Theo Loppatto*

The May 2026 FODL board meeting focused on:

- The Maryland-Delaware Library Association conference, at which Skip was in attendance and was a presenter.
- The recent Sussex County meeting, its format and logistics, including food costs and attendance.
- Advancing the planning for subsequent county-wide meetings - New Castle County – (July 13th) and – Kent County - (tentatively scheduled for September 14th).
- Discussion of plans and progress regarding updating the brochure.
- Discussion of the upcoming newsletter, including articles regarding the conference, dues increase, and the recent announcement regarding the upcoming retirement of Delaware State Librarian, Dr. Annie Norman.
- Discussion regarding the need to recruit additional board members from Kent County
- Consideration of options for online membership payments through M&T Bank or Zephy.
- Discussion of budgeting for food at future meetings.

Meeting Summary

Meeting Minutes Approval - The group approved the minutes from the previous meeting with motions from Theo and Skip.

Treasurer's Report Approval - The report was approved with motions from Mary and Marlene.

Joint Maryland-Delaware Library Conference Update Report - Skip reported on his attendance at the Maryland-Delaware Library Association conference in Cambridge, where he presented on intellectual freedom challenges for frontline workers.

In the course of his presentation, he highlighted the importance of Friends groups in supporting library staff.

Skip mentioned that Anne Hiller-Clark provided an update on activities in Maryland and Delaware, including the announcement of Dr. Annie Norman's upcoming retirement.

Skip noted that the conference was well-attended and successful, with the FODL donated gift basket receiving positive feedback. There was discussion covering the receipt and acknowledgment of donations to the basket's contents. The group was extremely grateful for Skip's generous donation including books as well as the basket itself. They were also very thankful for the other donations and notes will be sent to *State Line Liquors* and to Kay's daughter who provided wine through her workplace.

The group discussed including a \$200 in-kind donation for a fundraising basket in their budget, with Sue sharing details about the successful sales of various baskets at previous events.

Future Friends Group Programming Opportunities

Skip suggested that there could/should be more programming focused on Friends groups and Trustees at future conferences. The group then discussed programming opportunities for Friends groups and libraries, with Theo sharing her experience with *Citizens for Maryland Libraries* and past programming efforts for retirees. They agreed to add advocating for a "Friends' track" at conferences to their parking lot items, however noting "cost" as a potential barrier.

Discussion of Possible Guest Speakers

The group discussed potentially inviting guest speakers to their meetings, with a particular interest in having someone from *Citizens for Maryland Libraries* speak about their organization and work with Friends groups. Skip shared his experience working with this organization during the 'Freedom to Read Bill' advocacy in Maryland. The conversation also touched on the history of the *Maryland Library Trustees* organizations and past collaboration between *Friends of Delaware Libraries* and the *Delaware Library Association*. Skip emphasized the importance of including Friends, Trustees, and foundations in library programming as well as library professionals and para-professionals.

Board Recruitment

The team discussed the need to recruit additional members from Kent County, particularly noting the current representation gap despite having members like Jackie and Marlene from different counties.

Sussex County Meeting Review

The group discussed the recent successful Sussex County meeting format and debriefed on logistics, including food costs and attendance. The meeting was well-received with positive

feedback about both the format and the speaker, (Candace). The group identified areas for improvement including adding name tags and using a single sheet for feedback instead of individual slips of paper.

General Future County Meetings Discussion

The group discussed plans for upcoming meetings and recruitment efforts. They considered bringing in external speakers for future meetings, potentially from *Citizens for Maryland Libraries*, with a preference for virtual presentations to avoid travel requirements.

July Meeting Venue Planning

The group decided to replicate the successful program registration process used in Georgetown at the upcoming Newcastle County library meeting, with Vivian taking responsibility for coordinating with the library to add it to their reservation system if possible.

The group discussed venue options for the July 13th New Castle County meeting, with Kay tasked to explore locations including APPO, Route 9, and Kirkwood. They determined that Bear Library had no availability, while Route 9 had online reservation capabilities but limited space options.

The team agreed to maintain the same meeting format as previous sessions, including name tags and prepared questions. Marlene offered to handle desserts again.

Kent County Meeting and Recruitment Planning

For the Kent County meeting, they discussed venue logistics, with Marlene volunteering to contact libraries in the area, preferably those located in central Kent County. There was consensus that an ideal date for that Kent County meeting would be September 14th, however this date is tentative. The team agreed to include a recruitment article in their newsletter targeting Kent County residents, highlighting board membership opportunities and meeting details.

Newsletter Transition and Planning

The group discussed transitioning newsletter responsibilities following Phoenix's decision to step away. Vivian agreed to explore having Christine design a template format that could be used for future newsletters, with Kay to submit articles by June/July and Vivian to coordinate with Christine for design work.

Kay presented a list of newsletter content ideas, including the dues increase announcement, information about new co-presidents, and updates on various library initiatives. Skip offered to write a newsletter blurb about the MLA-DLA conference including a photo of the FODL sponsored raffle basket. As noted above the team agreed to include a recruitment article in their newsletter targeting Kent County residents, highlighting board membership opportunities and meeting details.

The team also discussed including information regarding the upcoming (August 2026) retirement of our State Librarian, Dr Annie Norman, who has dedicated much of her career to the people and libraries of Delaware, including but not limited to her 24 years as the Director of the Delaware Division of Libraries.

Status of FODL Brochure

The group noted the need to locate the original file for the printed brochure in order to update the content. Kay offered to contact the printer in Dover to retrieve that original file if possible.

Membership Payment Options Discussion

Sue reported investigating payment options for membership fees, with M&T Bank offering a 2% plus 4 cents per transaction service fee. Tiffany mentioned she was also exploring Zeffy as an alternative, noting it has no costs for non-profits but does require further investigation.

Annual Meeting Logistics Planning

The group discussed 2026 annual meeting logistics, including food costs and venue arrangements. They reviewed the previous year's Sussex County event, which cost approximately \$143 and worked out to about \$5.50 per person. The group decided to set aside \$150 for food at the next meeting in July, with the exact amount to be determined based on final attendance numbers.
