



Delaware Municipal Clerks Association

DELAWARE MUNICIPAL CLERKS ASSOCIATION
QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING
THURSDAY JUNE 26, 2025
TOWN OF DEWEY BEACH
LIFE SAVING STATION

IN ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS:

Stephanie Coulbourne, Town of Milton*
Katrina White, City of Milford*
Diana Reed, City of Newark *(Zoom)
Ashley Walls, City of Dover* (Zoom)
Linda Sommermann, Town of Elsmere*
Tracy Torbert, Sussex County (Zoom)
Tara Schiano, City of Newark (Zoom)

Akira Grenardo, City of Wilmington
Milanie Velazquez, City of Milford
Scott Allen, Town of Elsmere
Donna Schwartz, Town of Ocean View (Zoom)
Terri Hudson, Retired Member (Phone)

*Officer

CALL TO ORDER

President Coulbourne called the meeting to order at 09:00 a.m.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

Linda Sommermann was installed as Treasurer.

APPROVAL OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT (March 1, 2025, and June 1, 2025)

Katrina moved to add the Treasurer's Report dated November 26, 2024, and amend the dates of March 1, 2025, and June 1, 2025, on the agenda to February 11, 2025, and June 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Linda and unanimously carried.

Tracy stated that, if she remembered correctly from the November 2024 Treasurer's Report, there were two (2) expenditures, actually, one (1) expenditure. While reviewing the budget for the upcoming year, she noted that \$2,000 is typically allocated. She asked whether the reimbursement amount was increased to \$2,200 that year because the conference was held in Canada and required additional travel expenses for the town.

Stephanie stated that she was correct. She explained that Diana had proposed \$2,500 in the budget due to the conference being in Calgary. However, Diana and herself were unable to go, so it was then offered to Katrina, who ultimately attended and incurred expenses totaling \$2,280 for Milford.

Katrina moved to approve the Treasurer's Reports dated November 26, 2024, February 11, 2025, and June 19, 2025. The motion was seconded by Donna and unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES (March 20, 2025)

Katrina moved to approve the Quarterly Business Meeting minutes of March 20, 2025. The motion was seconded by Linda and unanimously carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Audit

Stephanie stated all the information had been gathered so that they could start the audit. She requested that the audit be completed by the next quarterly meeting.

b. Clerk of the Year

There was no report.

c. Education

Stephanie stated that while attending the IIMC conference, she connected with several speakers who expressed interest in traveling to other regions or even different states to facilitate educational sessions. A few of them reached out to her directly, and she forwarded their information to the Education Committee. However, she noted that their fees are likely outside the organization's budget, as they are requesting several thousand dollars plus accommodation. Stephanie added that she would prefer the Education Committee to focus on more local education sessions. She suggested the possibility of inviting someone with MMC status, a retired clerk, or another experienced individual who might be willing to lead a session. She noted that the main challenge, which Tracy could likely confirm, is determining whether IIMC approval could be obtained so that participants would receive credit for those sessions.

Tracy noted that it is not technically difficult to obtain approval; however, the sessions typically must meet certain requirements, including a minimum length of two (2) hours. Tracy continued to state that when there are budget constraints, it can be difficult to find someone willing to donate their time, especially when they are asked to lead a session that must be at least two (2) hours long. She explained that it often depends on the type of session being offered. Most of the sessions she has been involved with have been Athenian Dialogues, which tend to be more straightforward. She added that during their last Athenian Dialogue, the facilitator handled the submission to IIMC herself because she had previously led that same dialogue and had already completed the process before. Tracy noted that the ease of approval can vary depending on the topic being presented.

Tracy suggested that the first step would be to reach out to a potential facilitator and ask them to provide a list of books they prefer or would like to use for the session. She noted that the choice is largely up to the facilitator, since they are the one responsible for leading the class.

Stephanie stated that the Delaware Municipal Clerks Institute will be released in early July, with classes beginning on August 22 and running through October 30. She also provided a schedule of the courses. This year, the fee for the CMC program is \$575, the MMC course costs \$70, and the MMC five-course bundle is priced at \$315.

d. Nominating

There was no report.

e. Scholarship

Stephanie explained that Tracy was unable to use her scholarship last year and had asked whether it could be carried forward to 2026. Stephanie met with the Executive Committee, and they all agreed to allow the scholarship to be moved to 2026. She noted that they would handle it that way for now but would like to discuss scholarships further when the group reaches the budget portion of the agenda.

Tracy stated that they were waiting on information from Joy, as they typically try to schedule the due dates around their dates since those classes also usually offer scholarships. Based on the classes starting in August, she said she can go ahead and set the scholarship timeline, likely making the application deadline in late July. She added that they plan to release the class information now so they can begin promoting both the classes and the scholarship opportunity. The goal would be to award the scholarship by mid-August, prior to the start of classes. Tracy also reminded everyone that the scholarship is reimbursable. The organization does not pay for the classes upfront; instead, reimbursement is made to the municipality or whoever initially paid for the classes after proof of successful completion has been submitted. She emphasized that although the scholarship is awarded before the classes begin, the funds are not paid out in advance.

f. Web Development

Stephanie stated that she and Ashley communicate regularly about updates to the website, including changes that need to be made and any corrections that are required.

g. Membership

Katrina stated that while attending the conference, she had the opportunity to sit in on the president's meeting in Stephanie's absence. She asked the other presidents present what strategies they use to increase membership. She shared some of the suggestions they offered, some could work for their organization, while others might not. One recommendation was the traditional approach of sending out membership applications along with a letter explaining the organization, which they already do. Another suggestion was to speak with mayors about the association, highlighting its educational offerings and the benefits of joining DMCA. They also recommended visiting different municipalities in person to meet with clerks and mayors, especially targeting those not yet part of the association. Katrina noted that she also inquired about fundraising ideas, though that topic will be addressed later.

Katrina added that these were just a few of the suggestions they provided for increasing membership, emphasizing the importance of making direct contact with the mayors in these towns. Sometimes the mayor, or even their council or commissioners can play a key role in whether someone joins the association. She suggested contacting them by both through a letter or postcard, and by visiting in person to speak with them directly.

Stephanie suggested the membership committee create some type of letter or presentation and organize different clerks to attend various meetings, so the same clerks are not attending every meeting.

h. Mentoring

Stephanie stated that she recognized some names on the membership list as people who are no longer employed, have left their positions, or have moved on. She added that just yesterday afternoon, they received a call from the new clerk in Millville. She reached out to respond, providing information about joining DMCA and IIMC, highlighting the benefits, and expressing her interest in discussing it with the new clerk further.

She stated that managing the membership list will likely be an ongoing effort. She told Linda that she would forward the names of people she knows are no longer in their positions so the list can be kept up to date. She also mentioned that she and Katrina can continue working on the mentoring program and membership drive. She asked Linda to help develop a plan, and they will select clerks to attend some council meetings. Additionally, she noted that she has been appointed as a board liaison for IIMC's Membership and Mentoring Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Fundraising

Stephanie mentioned that they have discussed fundraising before. Akira had suggested the idea of towns paying a fee to join IIMC in addition to the individual clerk's membership. She noted that they held a 50-50 raffle at the Delaware League of Local Governments, which raised a little over \$100, and their own municipal clerk, Val, happened to win that raffle. However, she expressed concern about relying on such efforts, especially given the fluctuations in clerk participation over time. She highlighted the issue of having a limited number of members. Last year, she had proposed raising the fee to \$50, based on a budget assuming 48 members, but that target was not met. Consequently, she lowered the projected number in the budget. She also mentioned that they are currently facing a period of low clerk participation, with only a small core group actively engaged.

Katrina explained that during the president's meeting at the conference, she asked the other presidents what strategies they use to raise money for their associations and received several ideas. She noted that some of the suggestions might work for them, while others might not, and she shared a list of what she was told. One suggestion was to hold silent auctions, which they are already familiar with. Another idea was to invite vendors to their institute and charge a vendor fee for setup, even though their institute is relatively small. Raising membership dues was also recommended; when she shared how low their dues currently are, the other presidents were surprised, as they consider them much lower than what they pay. She, in turn, was surprised by how high some associations' dues are ranging from \$100 to \$130. Another suggestion was to set dues based on municipal population, though she noted she was not particularly in favor of that. She emphasized that these recommendations came from a variety of municipalities of different sizes.

She shared that one suggestion was to incorporate fundraisers into golf tournaments, though she noted it's unclear how many municipalities actually hold golf tournaments. Another idea was simply to host events and sell various items. Additionally, someone recommended partnering with the Fire Chiefs Association during their meetings to hold 50-50 raffles or doing similar raffles and selling baskets at ICMA, DLLG, SCAT meetings on a regular basis.

Tracy stated that she remembers, though it was several years ago, that one time SCAT held an evening event, since they meet monthly, where attendees could bring their municipal clerk.

b. Membership Communication

Stephanie reminded everyone to review the membership list on the website. She also suggested providing a link to the Excel spreadsheet, which is updated quarterly.

c. Clerk Get-together

Stephanie brought up the idea of a clerk get-together. She had initially considered organizing a gathering in mid-July in Dover as a central location, though she acknowledged it might be hectic this time of year. However, Andrea Bennett reached out and offered to host a clerk's gathering at her home, by her pool, as a BBQ where attendees could bring sides or other dishes. She added that attendees do not have to sunbathe, people can do whatever they like. The goal is simply a relaxed event where everyone can get together, without discussing work, to get to know each other better and network on a personal level. She noted that they are looking at an August 2 date for this get-together. A survey will be sent out to the membership with multiple dates as options.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of 2026 Budget

Stephanie stated that she had not made any changes, simply updating the balances based on the most recent Treasurer's Report provided by Linda. Dues were kept the same, and no changes were made to expenses. She noted, however, that the balances continue to decline, highlighting the importance of fundraising, particularly for the education portion. The scholarship was not used in 2025, which resulted in some savings that year. She suggested that, if desired, options for adjusting the budget could include transferring the unused 2025 scholarship to 2026. She wondered if they should not have a scholarship for 2026. She stated that her initial reaction is no, because there could be a clerk who needs the scholarship to attend educational sessions. However, she wanted to bring it up for discussion in case anyone else wants to consider it. She emphasized that education is the core purpose of the organization and she does not want to discourage any clerk from applying. She clarified that she had misspoken about the dates earlier, the 2024 scholarship, which Tracy received, is being moved to 2026. She reiterated that her main goal is not to take the scholarship away, but simply to present the idea for consideration if the majority wishes to discuss it.

Tracy noted that the scholarship amount needs to be increased by \$25 to match the \$25 increase in the Clerk's class fees, which are now \$575.

Stephanie explained that she calculated the dues based on a reduced membership of 40 people.

Linda noted that they had 32 members last year. She mentioned that she is not entirely sure how all the municipalities handle it, but she typically sees an influx of members around February after the dues are sent out. She added that it likely depends on each municipality's fiscal year and budget timing.

Katrina moved to approve the 2026 Budget as amended. The motion was seconded by Diana and unanimously carried.

b. Region II Update

Stephanie mentioned that the conference in May was fantastic and praised the clerks of St. Louis for doing an outstanding job. She noted that they were very engaged with all attendees, and that every educational session, whether led by clerks or external speakers, was excellent. She said she had a great time and particularly enjoyed the all-conference event, where they rented out the entire Gateway Arch. She added that she had no idea it was possible to go inside the Arch, let alone that there is an entire facility and museum underground.

She explained that IIMC is taking some time to wrap up this year's conference before moving into planning for next year, though the break has been short. Committees have already begun meeting over the past couple of weeks. President Abraham met with the Elections and Membership Policy Committee to discuss board directives for the upcoming year and to set deadlines, including for the mid-year November conference. Committee chairs and vice chairs review their goals and objectives, and each committee has established a priority list for items to address.

She noted that a lot of discussion in the committees focused on elections, emphasizing that any changes need to be implemented early, so candidates are fully aware of requirements in advance, preventing future complaints. She shared that in her region, there have been concerns about members losing faith in IIMC and opting not to renew

their memberships, which was discussed extensively with IIMC President Abrahamson through several emails.

The committees' top priorities are:

1. Elections and campaigns
2. Social media, board transparency, and executive sessions
3. Executive committee and board member resignation protocols—highlighted by the recent president's resignation and retraction just weeks before the conference, which caused unease
4. Opening ceremony protocols for international flags, due to coordination challenges and some countries, particularly in Region X, opting not to participate this year
5. Revising ad hoc committee creation policies and implementing an AI committee to develop proper usage guidelines and policies

She confirmed that committees have already started meeting, including a recent Zoom session for the committee she serves as board liaison on, showing that IIMC is actively preparing for next year's conference.

She shared that in Region II, the municipal clerks from New Jersey will host the 2026 regional conference in partnership with Rutgers University, from February 24th to 27th. It will take place at the Resort Casino in Atlantic City. An Athenian Dialogue is scheduled for the first day, February 24th, followed by the education sessions starting on the 25th. She noted that the theme, which was included in the newsletter, is "Municipal Clerks Are Practically Perfect in every way."

c. Scheduling of Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:

- ❖ September 18, 2025 – Virtual
- ❖ December 4, 2025 – Town of Delmar
- ❖ March 19, 2026 – Virtual
- ❖ June 18, 2026 – TBD

Stephanie informed everyone that she will be taking a medical leave of absence starting August 15th and is unsure of her return date.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Transcribed by:

Ashley Walls, CMC

Secretary, DMCA