

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**November 9, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m.**

**Orlando Public Library**  
**101 East Central Boulevard**  
**Orlando, Florida 32801**

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (11/0); Nicole Benjamin (2/1 – City);  
 Lizannette Tam (11/2); Sharon Smoley (11/2);  
 Ashley Cisneros Mejia (2/0 – City)

Administration Present: Steve Powell; Bethany Stone; Kris Shoemaker; Yvonne Hartley;  
 Danielle King; Erin Sullivan; Lynette Schimpf; Sara Gonzalez;  
 Leasha Tavernier; Erica Grant; Milinda Neusaenger

- 23-145 I. **Call to Order**  
 President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
- 23-146 II. **Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 23-147 III. **Approval of Minutes: Library Board of Trustees Meeting – October 12, 2023**  
 Trustee Smoley, seconded by Trustee Tam, moved to approve the minutes for the October 12, 2023 Library Board of Trustees meeting. Motion carried 4-0.
- 23-148 IV. **Staff Presentation: DEIA Update ~ Matthew Cavalier & Ruben Cortes**  
 Vice President Benjamin arrived at 6:05 p.m.
- 23-149 V. **Financial Statements and Summaries: October 2023 Reports**  
 CFO Shoemaker gave the Board a review of the October financial reports and summaries.
- 23-150 VI. **Dashboard: Annual Statistics Review FY 2023: Bethany Stone**  
 COO Stone talked about the dashboard for October and then give the Board an overview of some of the statistics and usage from last fiscal year. She highlighted the digital downloads usage in October which had a huge, 27% increase in usage over last year. A record was set in overall downloads with 290,615 downloads, as well as a record in daily average usage at 9,375.

Staff offered 1,363 events in October with an attendance of 55,424 – this included 47,424 at in-person events and 8,146 at offsite events. She highlighted a few of the offered events:

There was an Annular Eclipse on October 14<sup>th</sup> and thanks to a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and a supplement to the NASA @ My Library Project, the Space Science Institute's STAR Net team provided OCLS with 10,000 solar viewing glasses. Customers received solar viewing glasses by attending a program presented by OCLS related to the eclipse. From August 1<sup>st</sup> – October 14<sup>th</sup>, OCLS hosted 104 eclipse-related events with an attendance of 3,155. On the day of the Annular Eclipse, OCLS hosted 10 viewing parties with an attendance of 1,239. Most importantly, staff did not run out of glasses.

There is a lot of excitement about the total eclipse on April 8, 2024. Staff have been given 10,000 more solar viewing glasses for distribution. It is anticipated that there will be a huge demand since the next total solar eclipse seen from the contiguous United States will not be until August 23, 2044.

On October 28th, the Orlando Public Library hosted “Trick or Treat Safe Zone” in partnership with the Orange County Regional History Center. The event invited families to explore all areas of the library while trick or treating for candy, interacting with craft activities, and attending live shows like “Spooky Storytime” and “Spooktacular Music Band” In total, approximately 2,510 attendees visited the library during this time. There’s nothing quite like seeing the library filled with children and their families enjoying activities and having fun!

The new fiscal year began on October 1<sup>st</sup>, so this is a great opportunity to take a look at some of the usage statistics from the past fiscal year:

There was an average of 332,875 cardholders per month, which was a slight decrease from last year, but basically a flat number.

Staff is positive about this coming year, as there was a 33.75% increase in card registrations with a total of 63,164 registrations.

Social media connections increased 10% to 77, 492 – these include interactions on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

The physical item circulation statistic is very exciting – it is actual items that were checked out from one of the locations by customers or via home delivery. Physical item circulation was up almost 20% at 17.4% for a total circulation of 4,226,646. Customers are still reading and using library resources – the library’s outstanding Collection Development team is to thank for selecting materials relevant to the community. That same team is responsible for selecting the Digital collection, which saw a 13.8% increase for a total of 2,975,444 digital downloads last year.

Staff delivered 433,915 items to residents using the home delivery department. To give this some context, the branch with the highest circulation for the year had a circulation of 203,454 items. So, it is easy to see the value in being able to provide resources to residents throughout the county without having to duplicate items at every branch.

During the past fiscal year, PC sessions increased by 24% to a total just short of 240,000 – and as mentioned previously, this can be attributed to allowing customers without a library card to have access to a session a day.

Class attendance increased by 54% to 41,742 attendees in 12,437 classes, and Event attendance saw a 30% increase to 404,592 in 14,032 events.

23-151 VII.

**Action Items:**

23-152

**Director's Evaluation & Personnel Committee Meeting: Evaluation and Minutes Approval: Crockett Bohannon**

President Bohannon praised Director Powell for his continued dedication and stellar leadership during the last year. Trustee Tam, seconded by Vice President Benjamin, moved to approve the Director’s evaluation and the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

Trustee Smoley is now the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

- 22-153      **Main Library 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Rooms Refresh: Kris Shoemaker**  
Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Truste Cisneros Mejia moved to approve the Main Library 3<sup>rd</sup> floor meeting rooms refresh and to approve a budget not-to-exceed \$750,000, and to authorize staff to issue purchase orders for the project. Motion carried 5-0.
- 23-154      VIII.      **Discussion and Possible Action Items**
- 23-155      IX.      **Information**
- 23-156      **Strategic Plan Project Update: Lynette Schimpf, Chief Project Officer**  
CPO Schimpf gave the Board an update on the project to update the Strategic Plan. She reported that there is a team with subgroups and they are collection information during the learning phase of the project. They are utilizing user surveys and community data. The consultant from Fast Forward Libraries will coordinate individual, internal stakeholder interviews with the Board. She also shared that some community organizations will be surveyed for a needs assessment report. A three hour Board session will also be scheduled for April 2024.
- 23-157      **Strategic Plan FY 2023 ~ 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update**  
Director Powell reported that everyone on staff puts in the effort to positively accomplish and fulfill the Strategic Plan for the community.
- 23-158      **Director's Goals FY 2023 ~ 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Update**  
Director Powell briefed the Board regarding his goals. He stated that in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the Local Wanderer initiative has been very well received by customers, and that OCLS spent \$50,000 on the project and that the value provided to customers was over \$135,000. He further reported that during the Budget presentation to the Governing Board, he gave each member library information sheets customized to their districts. He also reported that there has been some restructuring within the organization in order to better serve the community.
- 23-159      **Removal of Fines: One Year Update: Jon Crowley**  
Data & User Services Department Head Jon Crowley, reported that after a year or so of OCLS removing fines, over 18,000 existing customers are now active again and they have checked out over 223,000 items since. He stated that there are usage increases throughout the services provided, such as: physical items checked out, PC usage and card registrations. He further reported that customers are very grateful for OCLS going fine free and they are returning to use the library. Some customers have said that it is a stress relief knowing that they will not be penalized if items are returned beyond the due date.
- 23-160      **Director's Report**  
On October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Events and Programs Department partnered with the Friends of the Orange County Library System and Ivanhoe Park Brewing Co. to host the OCLS Centennial Citrus Ale Celebration and Book Fair, which marked the launch of a beer brewed in honor of the library's 100 Year Celebration. The event was hosted at the Ivanhoe Park Brewing Co., where 305 attendees enjoyed a retro-styled book fair and the release of the limited edition beer. The beer sold out within hours, and the event raised over \$500 for the Friends of the Library, which sold books and merchandise at the event. The Friends also generated several new memberships from event attendees.
- Throughout the month of October, the Adult Services Department, Events and Programs Department, and the Melrose Center partnered with the City of Orlando and the University of Central Florida to host the Active Aging Opportunities Series. This series focused on empowering seniors who live in downtown Orlando assisted living facilities by connecting them with public transportation and cultural enrichment opportunities. On October 9<sup>th</sup>, the seniors arrived at the Orlando Public Library via the Orlando Lymmo and enjoyed Welcome to the Melrose Center! where a group of 11 seniors were introduced to the wealth of

resources available to library cardholders and Melrose members, including performing arts and show production, virtual reality tours and simulators, photo scanning and sharing, recording oral histories, collaborating in our sewing open labs or learning a new skill in a fiber arts class. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, the seniors built upon the confidence they gained from using the Orlando Lymmo and returned to the Orlando Public Library to enjoy Memory Lane. This event featured an in-depth presentation hosted by Julie Matura, an Associate Instructor with the University of Central Florida's School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, who covered the typical versus atypical effects of aging on memory, along with tips for maintaining healthy cognitive function. After her program, the seniors received a tour of the online resource Orlando Memory, led by Adult Services Department Head Vanessa Neblett. By the conclusion of the series, the seniors felt confident in their ability to navigate public transportation to and from the Library and couldn't wait to come back to explore all that OCLS offers.

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the Youth Education Specialist, in coordination with the City of Orlando, hosted Mayor Buddy's Book Club End of Book Party, featuring Pam Munoz Ryan, author of *Solimar: The Sword of the Monarchs*, with a total of 98 attendees.

In April, one of the OCLS social workers met with a customer who was 79 years old, suffering from chronic health conditions, and was on a fixed income. The customer indicated that paying her rent was very difficult and left her with little money to pay other expenses. Back in 2021, she applied to the Orlando Housing Authority (OHA) for affordable housing and the Section-8 Choice Housing Voucher (CHV) program for government financial assistance with her monthly rent. The customer informed the social worker that she did not receive any correspondence from either program other than her application was received. The social worker contacted both programs to determine the status of her applications and learned that while approved, she was number 128 on the waitlist. This would mean that she would have to wait until late in 2024 for affordable housing. Over the next several months, the social worker regularly contacted the programs and urged them to take into consideration the individual circumstances of this customer including her health, age, and financial limitations to expedite her claim. On October 23, 2023, this customer returned to the social worker to share some good news. She had received a call advising her that a reconsideration was made on her application based on her age, health, and financial circumstances and she was approved to move into an affordable apartment immediately. The customer was so happy and shared that the calls to the OHA and Section-8 Programs led to their reconsideration to move her up the waiting list and expedite her case.

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, staff from the American Heart Association and Dr. Duron Lee from HCA Florida hosted a staff training on "Addressing High Blood Pressure." OCLS staff members learned the basics of understanding your blood pressure and how to accurately measure blood pressure with the blood pressure monitor kits. The goal of this training was to train the trainer so OCLS staff could provide basic blood pressure programs for the community and to encourage residents to check out the blood pressure monitor kits.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, the Orlando Public Library hosted Orlando Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker Storytime, where 117 attendees experienced the tale of *The Nutcracker* with costumed dancers from the Orlando Ballet.

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, a Request For Purchase for a bookmobile was emailed to several vendors and advertised on the library's website at the Advertised Solicitations page. Then, earlier today, a mandatory pre-proposal meeting was held with five interested vendors.

While it's not directly related to library business, Director Powell also shared some news about some changes taking place on the lot across from our loading dock on Wall Street. On

October 30<sup>th</sup>, the old office building owned by the Orthodox Church was demolished. According to a story in the *Orlando Sentinel*, a developer is eyeing that site with adjacent parking and a large grassy area with parking along Washington Street as a potential location for a new 305-foot tower project that would include residential units, a hotel, commercial space, and parking.

This was a very busy week. On Monday morning staff kicked off the Mayor Demings' Toy Drive and have a donation box at all 15 of our locations for people to drop off new, unwrapped toys.

November 6<sup>th</sup>, OCLS hosted the signature author event featuring Neil Gaiman and Art Spiegelman at Steinmetz Hall at Dr. Phillips Center. More than 1,600 tickets were sold for this event, which was sold out more than a month before it took place. We are grateful to the Friends of the Orange County Library System for pledging \$50,000 to help make this event possible.

Then staff hosted a birthday celebration on Wednesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, the official 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, at all locations, where customers were invited to come to any location and receive a cookie and write a birthday card to the library. Those cards will be on display at all locations for the rest of the month.

Director Powell thanked all staff for making 2023 a very special year. Since the kick off the library's 100-year celebration on January 7<sup>th</sup> through November 8<sup>th</sup>, staff have made every effort to make every single event unique and special.

Director Powell said that with the utmost confidence, celebrating 100 years of service to the community has increased OCLS's value to the community and strengthened its position in the community. What a year – thank you!

Director Powell announced that tomorrow, November 10<sup>th</sup>, is the annual staff day where all staff meet at the main library for learning, networking, and fun. This has not been in person since November of 2019 and that it is going to be a fantastic day!

23-161

**Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**

President Bohannon announced that December will be Trustee Tam's last meeting. He thanked her for help and guidance in marshalling OCLS through Covid, hiring of the Director, and moving two new branches forward. Trustee Tam said it was a pleasure working with everyone and thanked them for all that is done on behalf of OCLS.

X. **Adjournment**

Trustee Tam, seconded by Vice President Benjamin, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

**Next Meeting Dates:**

December 14, 2023 ~ Orlando Public Library; 101 East Central Boulevard; Orlando, Florida 32801 --- January 18, 2024 ~ Orlando Public Library; 101 East Central Boulevard; Orlando, Florida 32801

Florida Statutes section 286.0105: If any person desires to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at a Library Board of Trustees meeting, such person will need a record of the proceedings; for this purpose, such person may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made to include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this proceeding due to a disability as defined by ADA may arrange for reasonable accommodations by contacting the Director's Office on the fifth floor of the Main Library in person or by phone at 407.835.7611 at least two days prior to the meeting.