

MEETING MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

February 13, 2025 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Orlando Public Library
101 East Central Boulevard
Orlando, Florida 32801

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (2/0); Nicole Benjamin (4/1 – City);
 Ashley Cisneros Mejia (4/0 – City);
 Venessa Tomlin (2/0); Sharon Smoley (1/1)

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

Administration Absent: Danielle King

- 25-013 I. **Call to Order**
 President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
- 25-014 II. **Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 25-015 III. **Approval of Minutes: January 9, 2025 Library Board of Trustees Meeting**
 Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Cisneros Mejia, moved to approve the minutes for the January 9, 2025 Library Board of Trustees Meeting.
 Motion carried 4-0.
- 25-016 IV. **Staff Presentation: Adult Services – Vanessa Neblett**
 Trustee Tomlin arrived at 6:04 p.m.
- 25-017 V. **Financial Statements and Summaries:
 September FY 2024 – Final
 January 2025**
 CFO Shoemaker reported on some of the various capital projects such as the Main Library Roof Replacement, OPL’s Exterior Lighting Upgrade, OPL’s Front Entrance Improvements and other system-wide improvements. The \$161,955 expended so far, is primarily related to the OPL first floor renovation Design, the West Oaks HVAC replacement and the North Orange remediation.

 He further stated that the auditors gave the library’s FY 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report a clean bill of health and that this would not have been possible without Finance Manager Lovevia Williams and the Finance Team. He thanked them for all their dedication and hard work.
- 25-018 VI. **Dashboard: January 2025 – Sara Gonzalez**
 Chief of Lifelong Learning Gonzalez reviewed some of the highlights from January. Door count is down 7%, card registrations are up 1%, and checkouts are up 3%. For events and classes, offerings were up 4%, and attendance was down 8%. The Winter Garden Branch was closed for a refresh beginning on January 7th. This accounts for a large portion of the small drops in multiple statistics, which was expected.

 She also explained a small change to the Dashboard this month. The display for Events and Classes was adjusted to show the raw numbers for onsite, virtual, and offsite event offerings and attendance. This change makes it easier to track trends in each category, rather than relying on percentages of the total.

As mentioned at the January board meeting, the food box distribution program, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, came to an end. This program, which began in April 2023, operated at five branches—South Trail, Chickasaw, Fairview Shores, North Orange, and Hiawassee. Originally intended as a summer initiative, it was extended three times due to its success. Unfortunately, the program ended on November 26, 2024, when additional funding was unavailable. Its conclusion will likely impact us for the remainder of the year.

January was another record-breaking month for digital usage, with a 12% increase in usage compared to January 2024. Both OverDrive and Hoopla set total monthly usage records. OverDrive's usage totaled 248,917 checkouts. The previous high record was in December 2024 with 229,279 checkouts. Hoopla's usage totaled 46,052. The previous high record was in October 2024 with 41,438 checkouts.

The spotlight this month is Offsite Contacts, consisting of website visits and Questline Interactions. Both numbers are three-month totals (Nov, Dec, Jan): Website visits were up 16% year over year and Questline Interactions were up 7%.

Two customer comments below, demonstrate the ongoing impact of the library's programs and services, reflecting their continued support and benefit to the community:

"OCLS offers great classes for Citizenship. The sessions I attended with Mila P. was a great experience of learning, it was excellent. Thank you for helping so many people to achieve our dream come true. Being able to obtain American Citizenship." - Southeast Customer

"The Eatonville Branch has become such a valuable resource for the community! The dedicated staff really makes a difference, offering support and guidance. It is a place for learning, connection and even creativity - where people can find not only educational tools but also a sense of belonging."
- Eatonville Customer

25-019

Strategic Plan: January 2025 – Sara Gonzalez

Below, are some highlights of the accomplishments for each of the primary goals of the Strategic Plan:

Be Welcoming

Youth Services reached out to Operation New Hope, a local nonprofit that provides reentry resources for people impacted by incarceration. Staff met in January to discuss what materials would be most beneficial for families and opportunities for resource sharing.

Be Connected

Marketing and Public Relations worked with Data and User Services to discuss best ways to reach non-cardholders to survey them about their consideration of the library. The departments agreed to reach out to Gale for an updated Analytics on Demand dashboard for OCLS. The product gives the library access to demographic data and contact information for people who are non-cardholders. The information can be used to create direct mail campaigns that reach out to individuals, and digital campaigns that target ZIP codes where households with library cardholders are low.

Be Forward-Thinking

Home Delivery has begun testing the use of text messaging for holds pickup with a small sample of customers. Testing of this service has been successful so far.

Be Empowered

The Training and Development department sent inquiries regarding career paths and best practices to the Urban Libraries Council and Learning Roundtable distribution lists and various libraries.

- 25-020 VII. **Action Items: Consent Agenda**
Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Motion carried 5-0.
- 25-21 **Orlando Public Library Exterior Lighting Upgrade: Kris Shoemaker**
The Board authorized the Director/CEO to execute a contract with Gomez Construction Company for \$602,435 and to approve the project of \$747,268 which includes a \$42,171 contingency.
- 25-22 **Southwest Author Event Request to Serve Alcohol: Leasha Tavernier**
The Board approved the serving of alcoholic beverages in accordance with the Board-approved policy at the event on April 11, 2025, at the Southwest Branch Library.
- 25-023 **Action Items: Non-Consent Agenda – None**
- 25-024 VIII. **Discussion and Possible Action Items**
President Bohannon announced that the May 8 Board Meeting coincides with the IOA Corporate 5K run, that will be held at Lake Eola. He stated that this happens every year and that in the past, it has been nearly impossible for the Board to arrive in time for the meetings, as many roads are closed and traffic is heavy. Alternative options were discussed, and the Board decided to cancel the meeting. Trustee Smoley, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to cancel the May 8, 2025 Library Board of Trustees meeting. Motion 5-0.
- 25-025 IX. **Information**
- 25-026 **Director's Goals: 1st Quarter Update: Sharon Smoley**
Trustee Smoley reported that everything is on track and that there are no concerns with Director Powell's progress with his goals.
- 25-027 **Director's Report**
There is exciting news from Horizon West. The first concrete pour for the Horizon West Branch took place early in the morning on January 31. Here is [a video clip](#) of some of the action.
- The first Lillian Louise Pharr author series event was held on January 24 at the Dr. Phillips Center. It was a very successful event, drawing more than 1,200 people to hear bestselling author John Green talk about everything from his time growing up in Orlando, to his work to combat tuberculosis in underdeveloped countries, to the inspirations behind some of the characters in his books. This event was made possible thanks to a bequest from the estate of Orlando tennis legend Roger Pharr, who asked that the funds be used to create a literary series in honor of his mother. The bequest was made to the Friends of the Orange County Library System, who sponsor the series.
- An author has been chosen for the annual Romance Wine and Chocolate author event, which is hosted each year at the Chickasaw Branch. This year's speaker is bestselling author Abby Jiminez, whose titles include *Friend Zone* and *Happily Ever After Play List*. She is also the owner of the bakery Nadia Cakes and has won several Food Network competitions, including *Cupcake Wars* in 2013. It is expected that this will be a very popular edition of Romance Wine and Chocolate.

February is Black History Month, and as with every year, the library is hosting the African American Read-In here at the Orlando Public Library. The event, which is held in conjunction with the 35th annual National African American Read-In, features local politicians, news personalities and influencers reading and performing works by African American authors, poets, artists and musicians. This year's lineup includes Congressman Maxwell Frost, Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, Orlando City Commissioner Bakari Burns, WESH 2 News Anchor Summer Knowles and more. This year's event will be held on the stage in the Melrose Center on February 16 at 2 p.m.

Every year, the Eatonville Branch participates in the ZORA! Festival, which takes place in downtown Eatonville in January. On January 31, during the festival's Education Day, the Eatonville Branch hosted Newbery Medal-winning author Jerry Craft for an author meet and greet. Craft is the author of the graphic novel *New Kid*, which tells the story of an African American 12-year-old boy trying to adjust to life in a private school that is predominantly white. More than 75 people came to listen to Craft, who now lives in Lake Nona, talk about his work. Before the event, he was interviewed by WKMG's Crystal Moyer about his appearance and [here is some of the video](#).

25-028 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report FY 2023 - 2024

25-029 **Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**

X. **Adjournment**

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Smoley, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates:

March 13, 2025: Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32801

April 10, 2025: Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32801

Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, states that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by a board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

La Sección 286.0105 de los Estatutos de la Florida establece que si una persona decide apelar cualquier decisión tomada por una junta, agencia o comisión con respecto a cualquier asunto considerado en una reunión o audiencia, necesitará un registro de los procedimientos y que, para tal fin, es posible que deba asegurarse de que se haga un registro literal de los procedimientos. cuyo expediente incluye los testimonios y las pruebas en que se basará la apelación.

Seksyon 286.0105, Lwa Florida, deklare ke si yon moun decide fè apèl kont nenpòt desizyon ki te pran pa yon tablo, ajans, oswa komisyon ki gen rapò ak nenpòt pwoblèm konsidere nan yon reyinyon oswa yon odyans, li pral bezwen yon dosye sou pwosedi yo, e ke, pou rezon sa yo, li ka bezwen asire ke yon dosye vèbal nan pwosedi yo fèt, ki dosye gen ladan temwayaj ak prèv ki montre apèl la dwe baze.

Orange County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or family status. Those with questions or concerns about nondiscrimination, those requiring special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and those requiring language assistance (free of charge) should contact the Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator at

access@ocfl.net or by calling 3-1-1 (407-836-3111). If you are hearing or speech impaired, you may reach the phone numbers above by dialing 711.

El Condado de Orange no discrimina por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, religión, discapacidad o situación familiar. Aquellos que tengan preguntas o inquietudes sobre la no discriminación, aquellos que requieran asistencia especial según la Ley de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA) y aquellos que requieran asistencia lingüística (gratuita) deben comunicarse con el Coordinador de No Discriminación/Título VI en access@ocfl.net o llamando 3-1-1 (407-836-3111).

Si tiene problemas de audición o del habla, puede comunicarse con los números de teléfono anteriores marcando 711.

Orange County pa fè diskriminasyon sou baz ras, koulè, orijin nasyonal, sèks, laj, relijyon, andikap oswa sitiyoasyon fanmi. Moun ki gen kesyon oswa enkyetid konsènan non diskriminasyon, moun ki bezwen asistans espesyal dapre Lwa Ameriken andikape yo (ADA), ak moun ki bezwen asistans nan lang (gratis) ta dwe kontakte Kowòdonatè Tit VI/Nondiscrimination nan access@ocfl.net oswa lè yo rele 3-1-1 (407-836-3111). Si w gen pwoblèm pou tande oswa pou w pale, ou ka kontakte nimewo telefòn ki anwo yo lè w konpoze 711.