

MEETING MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

January 9, 2025 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Orlando Public Library
101 East Central Boulevard
Orlando, Florida 32801

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (1/0); Nicole Benjamin (3/1 – City); Ashley Cisneros Mejia (3/0 – City); Venessa Tomlin (1/0)

Library Board Absent: Sharon Smoley (1/1)

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

Administration Absent: Sara Gonzalez

- 25-001 I. **Call to Order**
 President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 25-002 II. **Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 25-003 III. **Approval of Minutes: December 12, 2024 Library Board of Trustees Meeting**
 Trustee Cisneros-Mejia, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the minutes for the December 12, 2024 Board of Trustees Meeting. Motion carried 3-0.
 Vice President Benjamin arrived at 6:02 p.m.
- 25-004 IV. **Staff Presentation: Branch Highlights ~ Deborah Aponte & Jorge Santiesteban**
- 25-005 V. **Financial Statements and Summaries: December 2024**
 CFO Shoemaker reviewed the financial reports for December, and he reported on the ongoing branch projects. He informed the Board that the costs for the projects to date are as follows:
 Horizon West: 12.5% of the budget
 Lake Nona: 4.6% of the budget
 North Orange: 36.6% of the budget
 He also reported that the North Orange branch project is complete, and the branch is open.
- 25-006 VI. **Dashboard: December 2024 – Erica Grant**
 The door count is down by 2%, but card registrations are up by 4% and checkouts are up 5%. These are encouraging numbers, especially since two of our branches had short closures for planned maintenance. The Chickasaw Branch was closed on December 16, and the Southwest Branch was closed from December 2–5.
 Staff are thrilled to celebrate a significant milestone in digital circulation. This year, the library exceeded the OverDrive goal of 2.6 million checkouts, closing 2024 with a total of 2,634,583 checkouts. Last year's total was 2,269,380, which is an impressive 16% increase in annual usage.
 For events and classes, offerings were down 2%, from 2,033 last year to exactly 2,000 this year. One will notice that the Dashboard shows the total is down, but the

numbers look identical. That is because the numbers are rounded for readability. Attendance, however, dropped by 12%. While a holiday dip is not unusual, two specific factors contributed to the decline.

First, there was the conclusion of the food box distribution program in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank. This program, which began in April 2023, operated at five branches—South Trail, Chickasaw, Fairview Shores, North Orange, and Hiawasse. 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 impacted attendance this December and there will likely be an impact for the rest of the year.

Second, the new strategic plan has shifted branch focus away from offering as much take home passive programming. In place of passive programming, staff are offering more interactive programming like scavenger hunts and contests. While there was a slight dip in attendance, this engaging programming has allowed staff to build meaningful relationships and strengthen connections with the community.

This month, the spotlight is on the user ratings, and customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The Mystery Shopper score averaged 98%, a testament to the stellar customer service provided by staff across all locations. The Net Promoter Score averaged 92%, showing that the majority of customers are enthusiastic about recommending our programs to family and friends.

Below is a comment from a customer about the home delivery service. They wrote, *“We’ve discovered the home delivery service and love it. It’s such a great benefit to the library. Thank you!”* Comments like this and the December numbers reflect the dedication of the staff and the positive impact they continue to make in the community.

25-007 VII. **Action Items: None**

25-008 VIII. **Discussion and Possible Action Items**

25-009 IX. **Information**

25-010 **Strategic Plan Update FY 2025 – 1st Quarter Update: Erin Sullivan**

Chief Marketing and Public Relations Officer Sullivan highlighted some of the latest progress of the Strategic Plan:

Be Welcoming:

A new book drop has been installed at the Fashion Square Mall, the Main drive-up window has reopened, and the Rules of Conduct have been streamlined.

Be Connected:

Marketing has been implemented to support e-book checkouts, health/wellness and educator/school partnerships are continuing to grow, and contests and challenges have been implemented to engage customers.

Be Forward-Thinking:

Staff are establishing better data-gathering strategies, and technology enhancements will be used that align with customer habits.

Be Empowered:

The Employee Enrichment Experience program has been revived, there has been an increase in Friends of the Library staff scholarship funding, and a new IT ticketing system is in place.

25-011

Director's Report

On January 24, the first Lillian Louse Pharr author series event takes place at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The event is underwritten by the Friends of the Orange County Library System, which received a million-dollar bequest from the estate of local tennis champion Roger Pharr, who requested that the funds be used to support literacy initiatives named after his mother. The author featured for the first event is John Green, whose book *The Fault in Our Stars* debuted at No. 1 on the New York Times bestseller list. Green is also a YouTuber and a philanthropist whose Project for Awesome, created with his brother Hank, has raised more than \$10 million for humanitarian, grassroots charities worldwide.

The Friends are also winding up their end-of-year appeal, a project that helps them raise funds to support the library. This year's appeal goal was \$35,000, and as of January 2, the Friends had raised approximately \$33,000. The appeal stays open for a few more weeks, as late checks and donations continue to come in during January, and they expect to meet or exceed their goal.

On Tuesday, December 17, OCLS participated in an event at Sally Ride Elementary School during which students spoke directly with Sunita Williams, an astronaut on the International Space Station. The school was one of nine in the nation given the opportunity to contact the space station, and Trustee Ashley Cisneros-Mejia asked OCLS to partner with the school to support the event. During November and December, the Community Engagement Department offered space-themed storytimes and events at Sally Ride leading up to the December 17 astronaut chat, and the event was live-streamed at some of the branches.

The library participated once again in the Orange County Mayor's Annual Toy Drive this holiday season. The drive wrapped up and the more than 1,000 toys collected were distributed by the county to families in need during the holiday season.

Finally, WKMG Channel 6 visited the Southwest Branch recently to talk with librarian Sandy Mayer about a unique book club she hosts not inside the library, but outdoors at Bill Frederick Park. Crystal Moyer's story about the Nature Walk Book Club, aired on December 18.

<https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2024/12/18/love-reading-nature-this-florida-book-club-takes-the-library-outdoors/>

25-012

Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**X. Adjournment**

Trustee Cisneros-Mejia, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates: February 13, 2025 ~ Orlando Public Library; 101 East Central Boulevard; Orlando, Florida 32801 --- March 13, 2025 ~ 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.