

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

**January 8, 2026 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);  
Venessa Tomlin (1/0); Sharon Smoley (1/0)

Library Board Absent: Ashley Cisneros Mejia (3/1 – City)

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

- 26-001 I. Call to Order**  
President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.
- 26-002 II. Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 26-003 III. Approval of Minutes: December 11, 2025 Library Board of Trustees Meeting**  
Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the minutes for the December 11, 2025 Library Board of Trustees meeting.  
Motion carried 4-0.
- 26-004 IV. Staff Presentation: Staff Development Day: Colleen Hooks**
- 26-005 V. Financial Statements and Summaries: December 2025: Kris Shoemaker**  
CFO Shoemaker briefed the Board regarding the progress of the following projects:
- Horizon West Branch Library:  
To-date costs are \$17,072,878 or 62.6% of the \$27,275,000 approved project budget.
- Lake Nona Branch Library:  
To-date costs are \$1,650,791 or 6.4% of the \$25,965,000 approved project budget. Note: The City of Orlando is paying the construction portion of the cost (approximately \$20,183,864) up front and the Library will reimburse actual costs to the City within one year after receiving the Certificate of Occupancy.
- OPL Roof Replacement:  
To-date costs are \$3,667,104 or 80.6% of the \$4,549,600 approved project budget.
- South Trail Carpet Replacement:  
To-date costs are \$97,020 or 84.3% of the \$115,100 approved project budget.  
This project is complete.
- 26-006 VI. Dashboard: December 2025: Erica Grant**  
Chief of Neighborhood Services Grant reported that the door count is up by 1% over last December, and that check-outs are up 4%. She also reported a

significant milestone in digital circulation, OverDrive (the Libby app), hit over 3 million checkouts, closing 2025 with a total of 3,031,554 checkouts. Last year's total was 2,634,583, representing a 15% increase in annual usage.

She informed the Board that Events and Classes offerings were down 3%, from 2,000 last year to 1,950 this year and that attendance dropped by 12%.

One contributing factor to the decline in Events & Classes is a shift in the strategic focus away from scavenger hunts and other take-home passive programming (December 2024 passive activities were 5,157). While passive experiences will continue to be offered, there is now a focus on more active programming this year. Another contributing factor, staff are still in the process of hiring and onboarding a few roles and it is expected that the process to move more quickly now that the holidays are over.

An encouraging metric with steady growth is unique patron transactions, which reflects customers who authenticate their library card at least once a month. In December, 93,571 unique patron transactions were recorded, a 6% increase over last year, suggesting continued and expanding engagement with library services.

This month, there was a spotlight on user ratings. Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. The Mystery Shopper scores averaged 99%, a testament to the excellent customer service provided by staff across all locations. The Net Promoter Score averaged 95%, showing that most customers are enthusiastic about recommending library programs to family and friends.

CNS Grant also shared that beginning in January, OPL's Passport Services expanded to include an additional service day. Passport appointments are now available 5 days a week, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Following is a comment received by Questline from a customer: *"The library is the best thing that the county provides for us and when you look at your tax dollars and where they are going, I am happiest with the library. I feel like I get my money's worth with the library and you guys are always so nice."*

**26-007**

**Annual Plan Update: December 2025: Erica Grant**

CNS Grant reported that progress continues to be made across all primary goals of the annual plan, and she highlighted one item from the primary goal of *Be Forward-Thinking*:

In December, the initial configuration of Aspen Discovery, the new online catalog platform, was completed and staff testing was conducted. The testing was successful, and now the next phase of the project is ready, which includes staff training and a public preview of the platform. The platform will enhance the customer experience by improving discoverability and usability within the online catalog.

**26-008**

**VII. Action Items: Consent Agenda**

Trustee Tomlin, seconded by Vice President Benjamin, moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

26-009

**Consulting for Elevator Modernization: Kris Shoemaker**

The Board authorized the Director/CEO to execute a contract with Lerch Bates in the amount of \$153,000 for Consulting for Elevator Modernization and to approve the project budget of \$163,710, which includes a \$10,710 contingency.

26-010

**Wide Area Network Contract Award: Kris Shoemaker**

The Board authorized staff to execute a contract for WAN services with Smart City Solutions II, with an initial term of \$78,600 and a five-year total cost of \$393,000, before any applicable E-Rate reimbursement.

26-011

**Internet Service Provider Contract Award: Kris Shoemaker**

The Board authorized staff to execute a contract with Smart City Solutions II as the internet service provider, with an initial term of \$22,788 and a five-year total cost of \$113,400, before any applicable E-Rate reimbursement.

26-012

**VIII. Action Items: Non-Consent Agenda**

26-013

**Board Committee Appointments**

President Bohannon, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, nominated Trustee Smoley as chair of the Personnel Committee. Motion carried 4-0.

26-014

**Renaming the Designation of Reserves: Steve Powell**

Director Powell summarized the request to rename the *Future Strategic Plan Expenditures Fund* to the *Future Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and Annual Plan Expenditures Fund*. He explained that renaming the reserve to explicitly include the organization's Strategic Plan, Master Plan, and Annual Plan of Service would both better reflect current planning practices and allow funds to be intentionally allocated to the account on an ongoing basis. Brief discussion ensued. Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to rename the Future Strategic Plan Expenditures Fund to the Future Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and Annual Plan Expenditures Fund. Motion carried 4-0.

26-015

**Master Plan Consultant Contract Approval: Steve Powell**

Director Powell briefed the Board regarding the request to hire Group 4 as the Master Plan consultant and further explained that Group was not a Florida-licensed architect, and the Request for Qualifications did not stipulate this requirement. During review, the library's counsel at GrayRobinson identified the potential conflict and investigated it. GrayRobinson was advised by the Florida Board of Architecture that foreign (i.e., non-Florida) firms cannot contract directly with owners. However, foreign firms can contract with a Florida architect of record for consulting services. In the RFQ response, Group 4 identified the Florida-licensed firm Gresham Smith as a part of its project team if there was a need for Florida-licensed architectural work. The contract structure will be that OCLS will contract with Gresham Smith, which will take an active role in the project and oversee Group 4's master planning scope of work, as agreed by the library and Group 4. Gresham Smith will also contract with Group 4 to ensure that the scope of work is completed. Brief discussion ensued and Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to amend the resolution to include final approval by GrayRobinson will be given before contract approvals. Motion carried 4-0. Trustee Smoley, seconded by Vice President Benjamin, moved to authorize the Director/CEO to execute a contract with Gresham Smith in the amount of \$526,500 for Master Plan Consulting Services, and to approve the project budget of \$560,700, which includes a \$34,200 contingency. Motion carried 4-0.

- 26-016**      **IX. Discussion and Possible Action Items**  
Director Powell informed the Board that a demand letter was sent to former book vendor Baker & Taylor regarding outstanding funds owed to OCLS.
- Director Powell explained that the roofing contractor at Main used a sealant process that entered the building through an air handler and caused several staff members to seek medical attention. He added that an indoor air quality specialist evaluated the area and did not find any problems.
- 26-017**      **X. Information**
- 26-018**      **Policies Realignment Schedule: Bethany Stone**  
COO Stone shared the schedule for review of policies that will begin May 2026.
- 26-019**      **Board Meeting Email Process: Bethany Stone**  
COO Stone shared a board meeting app created by IT Design & Development for automating emails to be sent to the Board to verify their availability to attend meetings.
- 26-020**      **Director's Report**  
Director Powell reviewed the first year of the Strategic Plan implementation. He stated that it was a priority to ramp up senior and teen offerings, as well as outreach, and the results have been worth it. Overall use and checkouts are up, surveys show that customer satisfaction is high, and staff continue to connect with new people through the growing number of off-site events and partnerships.
- Currently the 2024-2025 annual report is being assembled, and some statistics that present a nice snapshot of the progress are below.
- In FY 2024-2025, there were as follows:
- **1.8 million** visits to OCLS libraries, up more than 75,000 from the year before
  - **7.8 million** checkouts, up more than 240,000 from the year before
  - **3 million** checkouts on Overdrive, the library's most popular ebook and audiobook platform. Just a few years ago, the library achieved 1 million downloads per year, and that number has grown exponentially as overall digital use surges
  - **26,000** app downloads
  - **1,790** offsite programs
  - **6,000** teen volunteer hours logged
- OCLS App**  
As of January 2, 2026, the app had more than 31,000 downloads.
- Friends of the Library Annual Appeal**  
The Friends of the Orange County Library System Annual Appeal is nearly complete. The appeal helps the Friends raise funds that they use to support a variety of library programs and initiatives, such as the book giveaways at Head Starts and during the Summer at Your Library Programs. This year's goal for the appeal was \$30,000, and by January 2, the Friends had raised more than \$32,000. Also, there were more than 207 new donors contribute to the Friends' appeal this year.
- Upcoming Dates:**

**January 17:** Nicholas Sparks at the Dr. Phillips Center (tickets still on sale)

**January 22:** FLA Library Day in Tallahassee

**January 30:** ZORA! Festival Education Day Meet the Author event: Dhonielle Clayton at the Eatonville Branch

**February 19-22:** Orlando Game Jam and Gaming Expo, Melrose Center

**26-021**

**Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**

**XI. Adjournment**

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

**Next Meeting Dates:**

**February 12, 2026: Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32801;**

**March 12, 2026: 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 deside 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.

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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 sitiyaasyon 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](mailto: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.