

MEETING MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

March 12, 2026 6:00 p.m.

Orlando Public Library
101 East Central Boulevard
Orlando, Florida 32801

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (3/0); Nicole Benjamin (5/1 – City); Ashley Cisneros Mejia (5/1 – City); Venessa Tomlin (3/1); Sharon Smoley (3/0)

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

- 26-038 I. Call to Order**
 President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.
- 26-039 II. Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 26-040 III. Approval of Minutes: February 12, 2026, Library Board of Trustees Meeting**
 Trustee Smoley, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the minutes for the February 12, 206 Library Board of Trustees Meeting. Motion carried 5-0.
- 26-041 IV. Staff Presentation: Events & Programs Department: Christine Lindler**
- 26-042 V. Financial Statements and Summaries: Kris Shoemaker**
 ➤ **February 2026 Reports**
 CFO Shoemaker reported that the Library budgeted \$8,000,000 for various building improvement projects such as the OPL’s Roof Replacement, OPL’s Front Entrance Improvements, OPL’s First Floor Renovation Design, various HVAC Replacements and other system-wide improvements. The \$1,384,643 expended thus far is primarily related to the First Floor Renovation Design, the South Trail Carpet Replacement, the Bookmobile Leased Space Renovation, and the OPL Roof Replacement.
- **Annual Investment Report – FY 2025-2026**
- 26-043 VI. Dashboard: February 2026: Bethany Stone**
 COO Stone reported that library visits and new cards created were relatively flat over last year, considering OPL closed early on February 20th and 21st for Immerse Fest traffic downtown, this was expected.
- Checkouts were up by about 11,000. Circulation of digital items continues to grow and was up 7% over last year and made up 54% of all circulation for the month.
- Internet Access is this month’s Spotlight and computer sessions were up 4% over last year. While wi-fi sessions appear to be down, this is because as mentioned before, this metric is now tracked differently to provide a more accurate count.

The OCLS App downloads continue to grow with an additional 1,400 downloads in February, bringing the total at the end of the month to 34,291.

The unique patrons transacting number for February 2026 was 97,215. This is the number of users whose card is authenticated by checking an item out, reserving a computer, registering for a class or program or using a database outside of the library. This number is just over 6,600 higher than last February, which is a 7% increase. In February 2023 the number was only 76,639. The unique patrons transacting for the month has grown 27% in the past 4 years. It is an important goal to not just increase library card registrations but also increase usage of those library cards. Seeing these numbers continue to go up is very validating and exciting, that the work everyone is doing is hitting the mark for residents.

The customer feedback for the month is from a Melrose Center customer, who shared that Ashley's 3-D Sculpting with Nomad was fantastic! *Ashley is a skilled instructor who made me comfortable learning new terminology and digital skills. Time flew by as Ashley led me through the exercise to create a character. Ashley's teaching style was engaging, and her interpersonal skills are outstanding!* Well done, Ashley!

COO Stone shared a report comparing OCLS to other similar sized Florida libraries. The information was pulled from the State's annual public library statistics and ranking report. These are compiled with the State Aid statistics that each library submits annually. The state then compiles the entries to create the report. The most recent published report is from fiscal year 2023-2024. The state breaks down statistics and benchmarking groups by population served and OCLS is one of the big 6 in the state of Florida. In 2023-2024 the library's service area population made OCLS the 4th largest library service area out of the 6 at 1.4 million residents.

26-044

Annual Plan Update: February 2026: Bethany Stone

COO Stone shared that on February 10th, the library transitioned from the previous catalog to implementing the Aspen Discovery layer. A library discovery layer, like Aspen, is a user-friendly search interface that allows patrons to search all of a library's resources – physical items, e-resources, journal articles and digital collections - through a single, unified search box. So, it acts as a layer over a library's catalog. Staff members are currently collecting feedback from users to assess their experience and then identify and adjust.

26-045

VII. Action Items: Consent Agenda - None

26-046

VIII. Action Items: Non-Consent Agenda

26-047

**Resolution to Honor Elizabeth Powell Upon Her Retirement:
Leasha Tavernier**

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Cisneros-Mejia, moved to honor Liz Powell upon her retirement. President Bohannon presented the following:

1. Whereas Liz Powell has dedicated 57 years working with the Orange County Library System and has continuously embodied the values of the System: Creativity, Integrity, Respect, Collaboration, Learning, Excellence and Service;

2. Whereas Liz Powell served in several capacities and departments since 1968, with the latest being Branch Customer Service Associate at the South Trail Branch;
3. Whereas Liz Powell consistently strived to provide excellent customer service to all internal and external customers;
4. Whereas Liz Powell rarely missed a shift unexpected in her 57 years;
5. Whereas Liz Powell had only been late to work once and only then because the bus broke down;
6. Whereas Liz Powell has adapted to and grown with all the changes at OCLS;
7. Whereas Liz Powell demonstrated the library purpose of enriching lives through experiences and opportunities to learn, grow, and connect;
8. Whereas her dedication and years of service to the System are unparalleled and might never be duplicated;

Now be it resolved that the Orange County Library System Board of Trustees publicly recognizes, honors, thanks, and congratulates Elizabeth Powell for her excellent and steadfast service to the Orange County Library System. The Board wishes her well upon her retirement and the next chapter in her life.

Motion carried 5-0.

- 26-048 IX. Discussion and Possible Action Items**
Trustee Smoley raised the topic of forming a finance committee. The Board was receptive to the idea, and a meeting has been scheduled to explore the option. Director Powell stated that he is in the process of creating next year's budget and he offered to explain to the Board how it is developed.
- 26-049 X. Information**
- 26-050 Director's Evaluation: 1st Quarter Update: Sharon Smoley**
This agenda item has been tabled until a later date.
- 26-051 Director's Report**
Summer Reading Support
Window World of Central Florida has pledged to support the library's annual *Summer at Your Library* program with a donation of \$50,000. The funds will be used to provide prizes and incentives for kids who participate in the annual reading challenge. This will be Window World's sixth year of sponsoring Summer at Your Library, and the company's combined donations to OCLS total \$300,000.
- Bookmobile Update**
Preparations are underway for the arrival of the Bookmobile at the end of this month. OCLS hasn't had a bookmobile on the road since the 1970's, when home delivery was introduced and the last bookmobile was retired. As the County has grown, there have been many requests for service in areas where transportation challenges make library access limited. The bookmobile will bring library materials, events, classes, WiFi and other services to communities, helping bridge that access gap. There are plans for a bookmobile ribbon cutting on April 29 on the front lawn of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.
- Targeted Marketing**
In addition to digital and streaming ads targeting seniors and teens, the Marketing and Public Relations Department has launched a direct mail campaign to households with addresses not linked to an OCLS library card. The mailers, which promote library card signups, were sent to 1,100 households in the area

around the Hiawasse Branch. Because a larger number of Haitian Creole speakers live in the area, the mailer is bilingual. Staff are also working with the Sentinel to do a companion digital ad campaign targeting the same area to amplify the library card signup message. When there is data about how much interest the mailer generated, it will be used to plan the next direct-mail campaign focused on another branch location.

February Event Highlights

African American Read-In: February 15, more than 120 people visited the Melrose Center for a celebration of art and literature by African American creators. This year's event took a slightly different approach than in previous years, focusing more on youth and children's literature.

Orlando Game Jam: February 19-22, 46 participants created games in the Melrose Center. On Sunday at the Melrose Gaming Expo, the public was invited to play the games and vote for a winner. More than 240 people attended the Expo. This collaborative, community-driven event brings together creators and residents in a shared, participatory experience. This [video](#) is of an interview with WESH Sunrise about the event, featuring Melrose Center Senior Digital Media Design Instructor Juan Rivera.

26-052

Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items

XI. Adjournment

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Cisneros-Mejia, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates:

April 9, 2026: Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32801;

May 14, 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 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 pwosedè yo, e ke, pou rezon sa yo, li ka bezwen asire ke yon dosye vèbal nan pwosedè 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 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.