

MEETING MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

July 9, 2026 6:00 p.m.

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

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (7/0); Nicole Benjamin (9/4 – City); Venessa Tomlin (7/1); Sharon Smoley (7/1)

Library Board Absent: Ashley Cisneros Mejia (9/3 – City)

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

Administration Absent: Danielle King; Erin Sullivan

- 26-094 I. Call to Order**
President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
- 26-095 II. Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 26-096 III. Approval of Minutes:**
- **Library Board of Trustees Meeting: June 11, 2026**
 - **Finance Committee Meeting: July 6, 2026**
- Trustee Tomlin, seconded by Vice President Benjamin, moved to approve the minutes. Motion carried 4-0.
- 26-097 IV. Staff Presentation: Master Plan Update: Group 4 Architecture and Gresham Smith**
Group 4 Architecture and Gresham Smith gave an update on the progress of the Master Plan. They identified OCLS strengths, such as being user-friendly, convenient and community focused. They also identified weaknesses, like smaller branches when compared to peer libraries. Brief discussion ensued.
- 26-098 V. Financial Statements and Summaries: June 2026: Kris Shoemaker**
CFO Shoemaker reported that the Horizon West branch project costs to-date are \$20,690,613 or 75.9% of the project budget. He also reported that the Lake Nona branch project costs to-date are \$1,908,960 or 7.4% of the project budget.
- 26-099 VI. Dashboard: June 2026: Erica Grant**
Chief of Neighborhood Services Erica Grant reported that June was the start of *Summer at Your Library*, and the dashboard reflects an uptick in community engagement with increases in visits, new library cards, and circulation. Door count was up 5% over last June, and new card registrations increased 10%, indicating more first-time users to OCLS. Checkouts also increased by 7%, and digital circulation continues to grow,

with digital checkouts increasing 14%, to more than 392,000 items over last year.

Attendance was down 5% compared with last June, and the change aligns with the intentional reduction of passive programming in favor of more active, staff-led experiences. Events and classes offered increased by 8% over last June. Last year, passive programming accounted for approximately 6,900 attendees, making it a significant factor in the year's attendance comparison.

This month's spotlight is *User Ratings* and the mystery shopper score averaged 98%, well above the 90% goal. The *Net Promoter Score* averaged 95%, a slight increase from 94% last June. These measures reflect consistently strong customer service satisfaction across the system.

CNS Grant shared a story that reflects the impact programs can have on community members. Kayla at the North Orange branch shared, "During my program today, *Homemade Play Dough for Seniors*, one of our customers shared his excitement for the program. He had surgery on his hand, and one of his physical therapists told him that a great way to help increase hand strength was to put play dough in a glove for a mess-free way to work out those muscles and build dexterity. He brought gloves with him to make one during the class and brought enough to share with the other participants!"

26-100

Annual Plan Update: June 2026: Erica Grant

CNS Grant reported that progress continues for each of the primary goals of the annual plan and she highlighted one item which falls under the goal of *Be Connected*: The Eatonville branch partnered with the Literary Arts Council of Central Florida, Inc. to host *Revive Zora*. This was a kick-off event for the Annual *Southern Fried Poetry Slam Festival* in Orlando, which brought 210 attendees to an after-hours program. Throughout the festival, additional events were held at OPL in the Melrose Center and the third-floor meeting rooms.

26-101

VII. Action Items: Consent Agenda

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

26-102

Request to Serve Alcohol at the Romance, Wine & Chocolate Event: Bethany Stone

The Board approved the serving of alcoholic beverages in accordance with the Board-approved policy at an event on September 25, 2026, at the Horizon West Branch Library.

26-103

Communico Contract Renewal: Bethany Stone

The Board approved the contract renewal for years 1 to 3 at \$102,000 per year, the contract renewal for years 4 and 5 at \$120,750 per year, and authorized library staff to execute the contract renewal with Communico.

26-104 VIII. Action Items: Non-Consent Agenda

26-105 Guaranteed Maximum Price and Project Budget Approval for the Orlando Public Library First Floor Renovation Project: Bethany Stone

Trustee Smoley, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the Guaranteed Maximum Price with Gomez Construction for \$16,827,363; to approve the total requested budget of \$22,375,000; and to authorize the Director/CEO to execute the Guaranteed Maximum Price contract with Gomez Construction.
Motion carried 4-0.

26-106 Alcohol Service Policy: Bethany Stone

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to approve the revised Alcohol Service Policy. Motion carried 4-0.

26-107 IX. Discussion and Possible Action Items

26-108 X. Finance Committee Meeting

This meeting was cancelled.

26-109 XI. Information

**26-110 Director's Report
Summer at Your Library**

Director Powell reported that the *Summer at Your Library* program is a little more than halfway over, and this year's signups for the Summer Reading Challenge have already surpassed last year's total signups of 7,567. This year, there have been 7,605 kids participating in the challenge, with three weeks to go before the summer program ends.

June Statistical Highlights

- 109,000 unique customer transactions
- 40,798 app downloads
- 47,663 people attended a library event
- 5,580 people attended a library class
- 3,242 people interacted with the library at an offsite event in the community

Legislative Update

The Administration continues to monitor the property-tax referendum proposal, which is now being called Amendment 3. Staff have been educated about the state statutes that outline how public entities may respond to ballot initiatives and shared talking points so they can accurately address public inquiries about the proposed amendment.

The Friends of the Orange County Library System, which is an independent nonprofit organization, is planning to educate their members and the public via an email and social media campaign arming people with information about the proposal and its potential impact on all municipal entities in Orange County, including libraries.

On July 6, the Friends of Miami-Dade Public Library hosted a town hall discussion of Friends groups to organize a public-education campaign about the impact the referendum may have on libraries statewide. Members of the OCLS Friends board attended.

On July 9, Marketing and Public Relations staff met with Orange County communicators from multiple agencies to discuss a coordinated effort to share vital information with the public about property taxes. Meanwhile, the latest round of marketing efforts emphasized the value that libraries return to the community, with a *Your Library, Big Value* tagline. There were also reminders in the *Books & Beyond* magazine about the wide variety of services cardholders can access at no cost.

Budget Meetings

All of the budget meetings with the Governing Board went well, and these concluded when staff met with Commissioner Wilson earlier in the day.

In Closing

Director Powell informed the Board that a commitment has been made to open the Horizon West branch in September. The exact date is to be determined, but the branch is near completion.

He also reported that the OCLS hospital takeover days continue to be inspirational and supportive for families with children facing serious illnesses. He shared a [video](#) from the most recent hospital takeover at Arnold Palmer Hospital in June.

26-111

Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items

XII. Adjournment

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Tomlin, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Next Meeting Dates:

August 13, 2026: Orlando Public Library, 101 East Central Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32801.

September 10, 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 oswa lè yo rele 3-1-1 (407-836-3111). Si w gen pwoblèm pou tandè oswa pou w pale, ou ka kontakte nimewo telefòn ki anwo yo lè w konpoze 711.