

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

**February 9, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m.**

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

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (2/0); Nicole Benjamin (5/0 – City);  
Danielle Levien (5/1 - City); Lizannette Tam (2/0);

Library Board Absent Sharon Smoley (2-1)

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

Administration Absent: Yvonne Hartley

23-016 I. **Call to Order**

President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

23-017 II. **Public Comment Policy & Procedures**

23-018 III. **Approval of Minutes: Library Board of Trustees Meeting – January 12, 2023**

Trustee Tam, seconded by Trustee Levien, moved to approve the minutes for the January 12, 2023 Library Board of Trustees Meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

23-019 IV. **Staff Presentation: Melrose in the Mix ~ Jim Myers**

23-020 V. **Financial Statements and Summaries: January 2023**

CFO Shoemaker reviewed the January 2023 financial reports for the Board. He reported that the Windermere Expansion project is underway. He also reported to the Board that OUC has announced that the rates for power and water are going to increase significantly, from 2.2 cents to 7 cents per kilowatt hour.

23-021 VI. **Dashboard January 2023: Bethany Stone**

COO Stone stated that customers started off 2023 at the library, with a 41 % increase in door count. This isn't surprising as OCLS continues to transition back to normal and statistics are rising. There was also a 32 % increase in physical items used – over 330,000 items were checked out from a library location or delivered by books by mail (which delivered 10% more packages over last year). In addition, there was another record-high digital checkout month with a 10% gain from last year and over 246,000 items checked out digitally – which is an average of 7,960 items per day.

Attendance at library events was also up 54% over last year for a total of 31,336 attendees – this was helped by the 100 Year Anniversary Kick-off on January 7<sup>th</sup> which was attended by 332 customers. In addition, library staff attended 49 community events reaching just under 4,000 people.

Last month the Board asked about the attendance at one of our locations compared to attendance at a program presented at an offsite location. So, staff wanted to share that number with the Board. At a library location – over 25,000 people attended one of 982 programs. In January, staff presented 107 offsite events to 5,779 people. This does not count community events – which are events staff attend to represent the library (hand out fliers and such) but aren't presenting actual library programs. Basically, the event would

be happening whether the library was there or not. The Board also asked to see a comparison of current numbers versus 2019 pre-covid numbers. Event attendance is up over 2019 by 11% - which equals little over 3,600 people. Which is great news! Classes haven't quite caught back up yet and attendance is about 30% lower than in 2019. However, staff are continuing to see attendance growth in classes each month. So, staff will continue monitoring that as we move forward. Ms. Stone mentioned that as we move forward, staff are beginning a project to refine the dashboard and how statistics are shared. The focus will be on highlighting the collaborative efforts with systemwide statistics.

On Saturday January 28<sup>th</sup>, the Southwest Branch hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony with past board member Rich Maladecki and Friends of the Library board member Susie Findell, to celebrate the grand opening of the OCLS's first permanent StoryWalk. The library partnered with the Orange County Parks and Recreation Department to install 20 displays along a paved trail at Shadow Bay Park in Dr. Phillips. Families will be able to enjoy the benefits of reading and the outdoors at the same time as they stroll along the path, reading the story and participating in fun activities along the way. This month's book was *Singing in the Rain* based on the song from 1929. The book will change each month and be themed to a different decade to coincide with the library's 100 Year Celebration.

The Board inquired about the Horizon West community meeting and CBO King stated that the meeting had been rescheduled for March 27<sup>th</sup> and will be held at the Waterleigh Community Center. The architects and builders will be there and will give a little preview of what the branch might look like.

23-022 VII. **Action Items: None**

23-023 VIII. **Discussion and Possible Action Items**

23-024 IX. **Information**

23-025 **Director's Goals FY 2023 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Update: Danielle Levien**

Trustee Levien summarized Director Powell's advancement with his goals. She praised him for the progress that has been made including: securing the \$100,000 grant for a book mobile and bikes from the Sorosis Women's Club of Orlando; the formation of a committee to develop a Library of Things; the completion of the Melrose stage project; and staff training and professional development to strengthen the talent pipeline, just to name a few. She reported to the Board that Director Powell is on target to meet or exceed his goals.

23-026 **Director's Report**

Director Powell informed the Board that there is a community service agency handing out garbage bags to individuals in need of something in which to carry their belongings. When these customers visit the Library, they are told by staff that they cannot bring the bags into the building as it is against rule #6 of the Rules of Conduct. He said that customers are allowed to carry various bags, including multiple grocery bags, but not garbage bags. The rule creates a conflicting issue. He stated that by removing the garbage bag restriction from the rules, it would alleviate the need for staff to confront customers carrying them, while allowing other customers to carry a variety of other bags. He asked the Board if staff can, as an operational change, remove the garbage bag restriction verbiage from the Rules of Conduct. He also said that the entire Rules of Conduct will be brought to the Board in 8 or 10 months for an update. Brief discussion ensued with the Board agreeing to have the garbage bag restriction removed from the Rules of Conduct.

Director Powell reported that in January, the Wi-Fi hotspot checkout program was launched and the response so far has been extremely positive. When it was announced in a social media video that OCLS would begin lending hotspots to cardholders, there were 190

shares, 13,000 views and multiple comments from customers praising the initiative. Staff are also hearing stories about how something simple like being able to borrow a Wi-Fi hotspot can make an impact on people's lives. One customer shared that she was going through financial hardship due to her spouse's illness. She lost her job because she needed to stay home to care for him, and she could no longer afford the internet at home. She said that this program will make it possible for her children to do their homework at home. She was very grateful the library offered this service.

On 7 January, 332 people attended the Library's 100 Year Celebration kickoff at Orlando Public Library, which included handcrafted nonalcoholic craft cocktails from Bandbox and music from the roaring 20s performed by the Z Street Speakeasy Band. There were other events held throughout the day, including an Albertson Public Library-themed escape room in the Melrose Center. Melrose also hosted a special edition of their monthly Improv show that day, featuring improv actors from the Orlando Improv Community. That showcase had 117 attendees. Also, some branches also held 100 Year Celebration events, including the North Orange Branch, which hosted an event that allowed 99 participants to create birthday cards and engage in other self-directed activities. Throughout 2023, we will continue to hold 100 Year Celebration events at all locations.

Director Powell also shared a letter that the Windermere Branch received from a customer who participated in one of the Citizenship Inspired classes. It is a great example of just how much of an impact OCLS have on people's lives, and he thought the Board would appreciate it. It reads, "Yesterday, I passed the Citizenship test: I am a US Citizen... I'm so happy. I want to let you know that the classes, worksheets and all the additional material that I received from all of you for the Citizenship test truly helped me, and I wouldn't have been as prepared as I was without it and your help. Again, thanks to all and to the OCLS team for being so kind and helpful. By the way, one of the questions from the reading portion of the test was one we practiced together. I'm very thankful again for all your help and assistance."

Director Powell reported that February is Black History Month, and that every year one of the signature events to mark the occasion is the African American Read-In, which features local figures performing and reading works created by African American authors, poets and musicians. This year, the event was held on Sunday, February 5, and some of the featured speakers included Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings, who appeared on screen for a pre-recorded reading played to the audience, City of Orlando Commissioner Bakari Burns, XL 106.7 FM's Johnny Magic and Congressman Maxwell Frost.

23-027

### **Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**

#### **X. Adjournment**

Trustee Levien, seconded by Trustee Tam, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 4-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

#### **Next Meeting Dates:**

**March 9, 2023 ~ Orlando Public Library; 101 East Central Boulevard; Orlando, Florida 32801 --- April 13, 2023 ~ 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.**