

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

**May 11, 2023 ~ 6:00 p.m.**

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

Library Board Present: Crockett Bohannon (5/0); Nicole Benjamin (8/0 – City);  
 Sharon Smoley (5-1)

Library Board Absent: Lizannette Tam (5/1)

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

- 23-053 I. **Call to Order**  
 President Bohannon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- 23-054 II. **Public Comment Policy & Procedures**
- 23-055 III. **Approval of Minutes: Library Board of Trustees Meeting – April 13, 2023**  
 Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Smoley moved to approve the minutes for the April 13, 2023 Library Board of Trustees Meeting. Motion carried 3-0.
- 23-056 IV. **Staff Presentation: Local Wanderer – Jenn Schock**
- 23-057 V. **Financial Statements and Summaries: April 2023 Reports**  
 CFO Shoemaker reviewed the April financial reports for the Board. He also reported that the Windermere expansion is the only active project and will be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 23-058 VI. **Dashboard – April 2023: Sara Gonzalez**  
 CLL Gonzalez shared some highlights from the dashboard. In April, there was a 22% increase in door count, a 22% increase in physical items checked out, and a 15% increase in digital checkouts, which is an average of 8,057 items per day. In addition, event attendance went up 37% and technology class attendance went up 71%. Out of those attendance numbers, over 25,000 were for in-person events and over 4,000 were events hosted offsite. Compared to 2019, OCLS is still doing well. The event numbers have increased slightly. The class numbers are still below pre-COVID levels. However, the combined event and class numbers is still higher than the combined overall numbers for 2019.

Ms. Gonzalez shared two stories this month that highlight the long-term impact that staff have had. In 2019, the theme for the summer program was “A Universe of Stories.” Since it was space-themed, the Alafaya Branch had a program where over 80 children wrote letters to NASA for the three astronauts serving on the International Space Station. Earlier this month, we received an autographed letter from one of the astronauts, Nick Hague!

The other story she shared comes from the Fairview Shores Branch. Several months ago, Social Worker Adrian, had a session with a customer who was very depressed due to his life circumstances, particularly his job that he felt was going nowhere. He shared that he had no hope that things would improve for him. After speaking with the customer for some time, Adrian learned that he wanted to get a CDL license to become a truck driver, but he did not think it was possible because he did not have the funds to pay for CDL training and licensure. So, Adrian informed the customer about the Level Up Orange program that

would pay for the CDL training offered at Valencia College and help with job placement following the program. The customer took the information and said he would look into it. Fast forward to earlier this month, this same customer walked into the Fairview Shores branch and showed Adrian a certificate of completion for the CDL training and that he was offered a truck driver position with Swift to begin later this month. The customer said that it was because of his meeting with Adrian months ago that his life was changed and he was so thankful for the time and information that he received at that time. He said he will never forget this experience he had at the library. Brief discussion ensued regarding the decline in classes.

23-059 VII.

**Action Items:**

23-060

**Employee Salary Increase & Pay Structure Adjustment – May 2023: Steve Powell**  
 Director Powell informed the Board that OCLS strives to provide pay and benefits that will attract and retain talented individuals and that although the library is ahead of the minimum wage law, the current rates of pay are not enough to attract and retain talented staff. The living wage for an adult in Orange County, Florida is \$18.85 an hour and for two adults (both working) with two children, it is \$25.46 an hour. As part of the library's reorganization, the lowest hiring wage will adjust up to \$17.10 an hour. Orange County Government discovered that its pay for non-bargaining unit staff was below market value and approved a 4% pay raise for those staff. They will also adjust the minimum of several pay grades by 4% and the rest by an average of 4.2%. The adjustment will take effect in May 2023. The library has consistently followed Orange County when it comes to compensation. This is an opportunity to provide an increase in pay at a time when employees need it most and aid with staff retention. Also, increasing the minimum of all pay grades would make starting wages more appealing to help attract valuable talent. He further stated that the library has the funding available to give Staff the 4% increase. The salary increase will cost \$87,500 per month and \$350,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year and that CFO Shoemaker has evaluated the impact of the increase and pay grade adjustment over the next several years and does not foresee it disrupting the budget. Discussion ensued regarding the amount of the increase in May and Director Powell stated that traditionally OCLS has followed Orange County and to not rock the boat by giving a bigger increase than the County. He further explained that the goal is to get to a total of a 9% increase by the new fiscal year in order to get caught up. The plan is for a 4% increase in May 2023 and another 5% increase in October. The Board asked how OCLS compares to other institutions and Director Powell stated that a compensation study in 2021 is out of date and that raises at the library haven't kept up with the cost of living. Trustee Smoley, seconded by Vice President Benjamin moved to approve a 4% salary increase for Staff and authorize library staff to increase the minimum of all pay grades by 4% effective May 21, 2023. Motion carried 3-0.

23-061

**Personnel Committee Chair Appointment: President Bohannon**

President Bohannon stated that since Danielle Levien resigned from the Board, the Personnel Committee Chair position is now open. He stated he will fill the position until there is a full Board.

23-062 VIII.

**Discussion and Possible Action Items**

23-063

**DRAFT Orange County Library District Annual Budget FY 2023-2024: Steve Powell**  
 Director Powell previewed the draft of the proposed budget for FY 2024. He stated that the budget is up 14.6% at \$99,347,000. Brief discussion ensued with the Board inquiring about the reserves and he stated that it is good to have high reserves with 6 to 9 months of reserves especially with two new, forthcoming branches. He also reported that the elimination of fines had a minimal impact on the budget, with a 0.5% reduction or \$350,000.

23-064 IX. **Information**23-065 **Director's Report**

During the month of April, the Library celebrated the NEA Big Read with a month-long initiative to celebrate *Catalogue of Unabashed Gratitude* by poet/author Ross Gay. Highlights included a keynote address by the author during which he read excerpts from his work, which attracted an audience of 93 customers; 44 themed events held systemwide, with 508 total attendees; and an Edible Orchard created at the Chickasaw Branch in partnership with IDEAS for Us' Edible Landscapes division. These events focused on the themes of the book, which include enrichment through literature, community and nature. NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, also sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

During April, OCLS Social Workers aided over 300 customers at nine locations on topics such as unemployment, SNAP benefits, and mental health assistance. Since the start of the fiscal year, our social workers have helped 2,418 customers.

Allison Ryall, the Genealogy Specialist from the West Oaks Branch, was contacted by a customer she worked with as part of a Book A Pro. As part of the research, the customer discovered unclaimed land that was owned by an ancestor. With Allison's help, she was able to continue her search. She was able to locate the 140-plus descendants of the ancestor and was able to move forward with claiming the land. The customer was excited to share her progress and extremely grateful for Allison's help.

On April 11, Youth Services hosted 11 high schools from Orange County Public Schools as they competed in the final district-level Battle of the Books event, which determined which school would take home the OCPS Battle of the Books trophy. Students competed by answering trivia-style questions based on books featured in the 2022-2023 Sunshine State Teens Read booklist. The final two teams, Ocoee High School and Timber Creek High School competed on stage in Library Central with Jose T. Martinez, Chief of High Schools, serving as the emcee. In the end, Timber Creek High School was victorious in the final battle. Overall, 66 students and 11 OCPS staff, volunteers, and parents attended the event.

We celebrated employee health and well-being at our annual health fair, April 17-21 at five locations throughout the system. We offered biometric and EKG screenings, bone density scans, flexibility testing and chair massages. Our theme this year is "Health that Connects," and we had over 100 employees attend the events. Vendors from MissionSquare Retirement, United Healthcare and MetLife were on-site to answer benefit questions and offer staff support. A highlight of the week was a visit from Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid Florida: Hearts of Gold Therapy Dogs. This year's events also initiated successful new vendor partnerships with Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid Florida: Hearts of Gold Therapy Dogs and Hands2Heal Massage. A final count of screenings completed will be available later this month.

Beginning on April 25, the Fairview Shores and Chickasaw Branch began distributing shelf-stable food boxes provided by Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida. Each location gave out 100 boxes during their first week of distribution. The partnership is expected to continue weekly through the duration of the grant cycle, which is at the end of July. The food distribution is partially funded by Orange County.

On Friday, April 28, 85 people attended the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Southwest Author Series event at the Southwest Library. Presented in partnership with the Dr. Phillips Rotary Club, participants had the opportunity to hear *New York Times* bestselling author Jane Green speak about the research and writing process of her newest novel, *Sister Stardust*. Following the presentation, attendees were able to meet and have their books signed by

Jane Green. Two of the author's newest titles were available for purchase at the event, thanks to sponsorship by the Friends of the Orange County Library System. Branch Manager Sarah Qronfleh and her staff did a fantastic job hosting the event.

Branch Outreach Specialist Arthur Ugalde met with seniors at the L. Claudia Allen Senior Center to teach them how to use the self-check machine at their local Walmart. The seniors had been experiencing a lot of angst when trying to navigate the self-check machines at Walmart since they only have an hour dedicated to shopping and checking out. Arthur accompanied 10 senior citizens, including one 90-year-old in a walker, on their trip to Walmart on April 27. Arthur was able to help these seniors navigate the issues they were experiencing so they could complete their purchases promptly.

The Chickasaw Branch has re-established a relationship with Covenant House, an organization that provides safe housing for young adults experiencing homelessness. They will be providing library cards for young people, ages 15-25, currently living at their facilities. Library staff will also be offering technology and career-oriented programs to get them excited about the possibilities we offer for lifelong learning.

23-066

**Public Comment: Non-Agenda Items**

Melinda Bridges – spoke about the need of a branch to service the North Apopka, Zellwood and Tangerine areas.

Kate Reddy – spoke about the Children’s Library computer use.

Jonathan Blount – spoke about the equity of the library staff.

X. **Adjournment**

Vice President Benjamin, seconded by Trustee Smoley, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 3-0. President Bohannon adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

**Next Meeting Dates:**

**June 8, 2023 ~ Orlando Public Library; 101 East Central Boulevard; Orlando, Florida 32801 --- July 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.**