



Manatee County Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2026

Central Library Conference Room, 10 a.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Christine Callahan
Jim Russell
Ashley Dawson
Patsy Ugarte
Lauren Quinn
Ericka Dow
Chelsea Ross-Munro
Commissioner Amanda Ballard

Unable to Attend:

Andy Sulavik

Guests:

Mall Chaney
Jeff Goldman

Call to Order

10:00 a.m. by Chairman Jim Russell. Jim took attendance and read the mission statement.

Approval of Minutes

Jim inquired if everyone reviewed the minutes from May 20, 2026. Christine made the motion to approve the minutes, and Patsy seconded. All were in favor; the motion carried. Therefore, Jim announced the minutes were approved.

Library Services Updates & Information

- Facility Updates:
 - Washington Park Kiosk:

- Molly advised the kiosk will not be funded this year and not moving forward, we may bring it back to the table. The kiosk was approximately \$200,000 but the construction was double the amount.
- Lakewood Ranch Second Floor:
 - Molly stated the furniture is starting to deliver; second floor is coming along. The adult section will move upstairs, more youth on the main floor. This will happen in stages but coming along.
 - Chelsea advised staff at Lakewood Ranch are completing 60-65 programs per month. Over 300 kids attended their Summer Kick Off Party.
 - Christine asked if programs will be affected by the cuts.
 - Chelsea advised yes, staff led programs.
- Bookmobile:
 - Ericka advised there is a manufacturer delay, the material for the side panel. We were advised it will be at least a 90 day delay. The Foundation is hoping the Bookmobile will be available for their author event in Oct, we hope it will be available by then. Staff continue to prepare even with the delay.
 - Lauren inquired if procurement would try to get some funds back from this delay, in times of tight budgets.
 - Molly stated it is a great idea; she will follow-up if there are any updates to pass along.
 - Christine asked if the staff are assisting in other ways, since there is a delay.
 - Chelsea and Ericka advised that the new bookmobile staff are all internal, and still assisting at their original locations while working with their new team.
 - Jim asked what we really think the delay would be.
 - Chelsea stated we are thinking September, with the 90 day delay.
- Statistics:
 - Summer Learning has 2,186 participants as of this morning and it just started a couple of weeks ago. We hope the numbers continue to grow.
 - Ericka provided a handout for our online catalog, Vega, showing a month worth of data. This shows how many people are interacting with the catalog. Chelsea pointed out the different carousels on the homepage, a lot of engagement.
 - Christine asked if the carousels are user defined.
 - Chelsea and Ericka confirmed yes, they are record sets. Collection Development staff pick the books.
- Staffing:
 - Technical Services Supervisor position has just closed, will be starting interviews. Our Marketing Specialist will be out of office, a previous summer intern, Elle Baray-Forget, will be filling in temporarily.
 - We are currently at 17 vacancies with three more pending. We are going over different scenarios; a reduction of hours is probably coming. We have to decide what this will look like.
 - Chelsea advised we are pulling a lot of data and statistics; we want the least impact but most impactful. We want to provide the services that are most important to the community.
 - Molly went over a scenario that we open at 10am instead of 9am.
 - Lauren asked if there are any hotspots.

- Ericka advised Island, Rocky Bluff, Lakewood Ranch, South Manatee and Information Services at Central.
- Molly advised the Island branch only has five staff members, if we lose three, it is a lot. The teams are working well together.
- Ericka advised we are currently hiring four OPS/ temporary employees to assist us.
- Commissioner Ballard stated the freeze is until the tax reform is complete. Administration does not want to bring on full time staff if there is a possibility they may need to let them go right away.
- Lauren asked if there is a tipping point.
- Molly advised we are pretty much there, we are looking for a happy medium.
- Christine asked how the community is being informed, do they understand how the vote will impact services.
- Commissioner Ballard stated there were significant workshops earlier in the year, they had very low participation, but we did want to get ahead of it. The Library Foundation is very interested in putting together some discussions.
- Ericka advised it will need to be our support groups; they need to be our front. The library will look to the county for directions on how to provide information to the public.
- Lauren asked if there are toolkits available for HOAs. A lot of the community does not know about things going on.
- Commissioner Ballard stated that is a smart way to do this, sometimes county events do not get traction.

New Business

- County Librarian:
 - Molly announced Andy Sulavik as the new County Librarian, currently he is a county employee. Andy is a very sharp gentleman; he did have a pre-scheduled vacation which is why he is not attending the meeting. We are excited to have him, he has a Doctorate in Theology, and he will be a great leader.
 - Christine asked about his current position.
 - Molly advised that we did post for the position and it just closed.
- R&R Projects:
 - Chelsea advised R&R is allocated funds to refresh the library buildings. We are planning for new furniture at Central and Palmetto.
 - Central will have new furniture on both floors, meeting room and auditorium. New teen furniture in the YA section, some of this furniture is original and from the 70s.
 - Palmetto is receiving new teen furniture; they have been reconfiguring their space. They are getting Wi-Fi countertops for patrons and re-painting. It has been 12 years since they have had paint refreshed in the branch. Chelsea thanked Molly and the Commissioners for this R&R.

Old Business

- Central Library – Updates from Commissioner Tal Siddique
 - Ericka, Molly and Andy met with Career Source for gathering information. Career Source currently has a lease through Summer 2028, so they will be getting back to us. Their current building is under contract to be sold, this is why they are looking for space and looking into the downtown Bradenton area.
 - Discussions regarding enclosing the children's space so it is not wide open. Currently the staircase is a big draw for children. We are just looking into the possibilities of this.

Action Items

- Central Library Considerations:
 - If you have any thoughts on downtown, how we can enhance our services. It will be a balance with reducing our service hours.
- Library IQ Map:
 - Ericka went over the overall snapshot; the dots are where the cardholders are located.
 - Jim inquired if there have been any changes to the current number of cardholders.
 - Chelsea and Ericka advised around 150,000.
 - Lauren asked if this snapshot would include card holders from Sarasota.
 - Chelsea and Ericka advised yes.

Comment

- Mall Chaney:
 - Very excited, knows Andy and excited that he was picked for County Librarian. He has a lot of experience and his whole family is librarians, wonderful choice. Would like to say thank you for the new furniture.
- Jeff Goldman:
 - Lakewood Ranch resident, member of Friends of Lakewood Ranch Library. Jeff thanked Commissioner Ballard and the county for what they have done for the library. Lakewood Ranch is a crown jewel, amazing structure. Has attended meetings at the branch, and the library is very active in everything going on in the community. The second floor is very exciting. Speaking with residents, eyes light up when they hear property tax reduction. Jeff stated he has attended workshops in Sarasota at the Selby Library, the main concern is how to get the word out, libraries will be hit hard. Jeff thanked everyone.

With no further business to discuss, Christine motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ashley seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 am by Jim Russell

- Next meeting: 07/15/2026
- Time: 10:00am
- Location: Central Library – Central Library Conference Room