



Manatee County Library Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Central Library Conference Room, 10 a.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Patsy Ugarte
Christine Callahan
Jim Russell
Ashley Dawson
Lauren Quinn
Tammy Parrott

Unable to Attend:

Commissioner Amanda Ballard

Guests:

Jeff Goldman
Mall Chaney

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 February 25, 2026. Patsy made the motion to approve the minutes. All were in favor; the motion carried. Therefore, Jim announced the minutes were approved.

Library Services Updates & Information

- Staffing Updates:
 - Service Levels & Staffing Constraints - Tammy advised:
 - The library system continues to operate at full capacity; however, the countywide hiring freeze remains in effect.

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- Temporary positions have been posted to support operations.
- Permanent vacancies, including the Assistant County Librarian, remain unfilled.
- Operational strain is beginning to increase due to staffing limitations.
 - Volunteer Support – Tammy stated that a problem we currently have is that we would like to use volunteers to stretch our staffing. Staff are exploring expanded use of volunteers to supplement services. An example is pairing one staff member with one volunteer for programming such as story times, this approach is viewed as an effective way to extend service delivery within current constraints.
 - Lauren asked what the bottleneck is currently.
 - Tammy advised it is at county level, HRs reduction in staff may be a part of it.
- Statistical Updates:
 - Library usage continues to increase; catalog logins are back on track.
- Facility Updates: Tammy advised we are in good shape, continued refresh happening around the branches.
 - Lakewood Ranch:
 - Project is progressing, recent temporary closure due to water shutoff.
 - Awaiting occupancy permit; furniture installation to begin soon.
 - Design includes flexible, movable study pods, large and small.
 - Rocky Bluff:
 - Construction has not yet begun; final construction bid pending.
 - Washington Park (Palmetto Area):
 - Foundation support for the project is uncertain.
 - Site limitations include small footprints.
 - Concept may be better suited as a “storefront” model for holds pickup and returns rather than a full-service branch.
- Library Facility Planning:
 - Tammy presented long-term planning data, including:
 - Historical analysis dating back to 1972
 - Current millage rate of 0.1825
 - Tammy noted that the current low millage rate is likely temporary but, combined with the staffing freeze, creates concern about maintaining service levels.
 - Patsy asked if there has been discussion about the Myakka Community Center.
 - Tammy advised yes, but nothing has moved, only discussion.
 - Ashley asked if there has been discussion about adding a store front at the new Seaflower development area on 75th St.
 - Tammy stated that no discussions have occurred with this area.
 - Tammy asked that everyone think about it, maybe establish a small subcommittee. Commissioners have heard Tammy but hearing it from citizens would help.
 - Jim stated that there are a lot of stores coming and going, possibly some spaces we can take over instead of new builds and asked where we go from here.
 - Tammy stated that we will add the Subcommittee to New Business next month for more discussion.

New Business

- Mobile Services – Sub Committee
- Tammy requested the Board consider forming a subcommittee to:
 - Evaluate expansion strategies
 - Provide community driven input to the County Commission

This item will return under New Business at the next meeting.

- Bookmobile Discussion:
 - Estimated arrival: mid-May 2026
 - Additional time required for:
 - Vehicle and collection
 - Staff driver training
 - Initial rollout will include special appearances, followed by a regular service schedule
 - Planned operation: five days per week, with flexibility for events
- Additional details:
 - Collection development is underway (\$98,000 total; \$25,000 contributed by the Foundation)
 - Routes will be finalized after delivery
 - Lauren asked if there is a target launch.
 - Tammy stated that we will receive the bookmobile, equip it which can take a couple of weeks. There is still one more trip to see the bookmobile, library staff will not be there due to budgeting, but we will have Fleet send us images.
 - Jim asked if (Meaghan and team) can attend the April meeting to provide more information.

Old Business

- None

Action Items

- None

Comment

- Mall Chaney:
 - Expressed concern regarding project timelines, particularly the Bookmobile
 - Confirmed that Bookmobile funding has been secured across prior and current budgets
 - Inquired about progress at Mixon; design phase has not yet begun
- Jeff Goldman:
 - Shared positive feedback on public-facing tax dollar transparency displays
 - Requested additional information on Bookmobile operations
- Additional Discussion:

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- Interest expressed in potential partnerships or service opportunities at locations such as the Soar Lab due to high community usage.
- Board members noted that demand for mobile services may grow quickly once implemented.
- Property tax discussions remain a key factor influencing long-term planning and expansion decisions. Lauren attended the Lakewood Ranch workshop and there were about 40 individuals there.

With no further business to discuss, Patsy motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ashley seconded. Meeting adjourned at 11:22 am by James Russell

- Next meeting: 05/20/2026
- Time: 10:00am
- Location: Central Library – Central Library Conference Room