

May 2026 Board President Report

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Since our last meeting, I have been focused on helping the Board keep several active issues in the right governance lane: clear decisions, clear owners, clear dates, and a shared understanding of where trustees can add value while respecting management's role in day-to-day operations.

Petit Library Community Room

Petit remains the most time-sensitive capital project currently before us. I want to provide brief background on what has happened since our last meeting, because there has been meaningful progress in organizing the facts and clarifying the next decision points, even though the project is not yet ready for a final Board decision.

Over the last month, Amanda and staff have pulled together a much clearer project history, funding record, and appendix packet. That work, in partnership with the County, has helped identify the major issues more precisely: the status of the New York State construction grant, the usable funding stack, the Popli contract and updated cost-estimate path, the County-side process, and whether any Board vote or external advocacy may be needed. We also now have a better record of the 2021 estimate, the 2022 County funding action, the late-2022 bid gap, the 2024 scaled-back proposal, and the current Popli proposal for updated code and bid-document work.

That is useful progress. The reality is that the project still requires a clear, current, decision-ready picture before the Board can determine what action, if any, is needed. As we proceed, the Board should have a written update that clearly summarizes current scope, available funding, grant timing, County position, procurement path, schedule, and any Board action needed.

Before the Board is asked to vote, fundraise, advocate externally, or respond publicly, we should have a written update that answers:

- what Popli has been authorized to do and when an updated probable cost estimate will be available;
- what services are included or excluded, including bidding, construction administration, closeout, construction management, permits, escalation, contingency, and value engineering;
- what funding is confirmed, restricted, encumbered, expired, at risk, under review, or only possible;
- what happens to the New York State construction grant if the June 30, 2026 closeout deadline cannot be met;
- whether the State Library has confirmed any scope amendment, match treatment, recoupment risk, or future eligibility issue in writing;
- what the County position is on further funding and which County-side steps still remain;
- what decision, if any, the Board will need to make and by when.

Tim Mulvey has offered to stay more closely connected to the Petit work, and I appreciate his willingness to help. My expectation is that Tim can stay in communication with Amanda, staff,

and the Board President as needed, help make sure information is flowing back to the Board, and support owner/date clarity. That role should remain tightly bounded. It should support reporting and Board communication; it should not become project management or vendor/County process management.

Central Security / Freeland Trial

Central security also needs to remain on the Board's radar as a governance and oversight issue. The Board does not need to manage the deployment of security staff. At the same time, because this work affects public service, staff safety, patron experience, budget, policy, and public trust, the Board should understand how the current approach will be evaluated.

Central Library is in the midst of a 90-day trial with Freeland Security with an expanded number of guards. As that trial continues, the Board should be aware of the cost, funding source, baseline incident data, success measures, and the date when management will return with a recommendation about future security needs.

This trial gives OCPL and the Board an opportunity to understand what has changed on the ground, what we are comparing it against, and what would make the trial worth continuing, changing, or ending. It will also be important to distinguish which pieces are operational, which are budgetary, and which may belong with the Policy Committee.

Strategic Pathways Implementation

The Board accepted Strategic Pathways in March 2025. The next phase is making sure it becomes part of our operating rhythm rather than a document we reference occasionally.

For future updates, I would like us to keep asking:

- which pathway is being advanced;
- what changed since the last update;
- what evidence supports that progress;
- who owns the next step;
- what, if anything, the Board or a committee needs to do.

This is especially important as staffing roles change and as we continue to align Board oversight, management priorities, and systemwide goals.

Committee Reports

I also want to make sure we are using our committee structure well. Executive, Finance, Policy, and Government Relations each have a different role to play, and the full Board should be clear about what each committee reviewed, what needs to come back as a recommendation, and where trustee participation would be useful.

As we move forward, I am asking committee chairs to frame reports around five questions:

- What did the committee review?
- What needs full Board action?
- What owner/date follow-up exists?
- What risk or strategic issue should the Board understand?
- What should management bring back next?

The goal is not for committees to create more paperwork. The goal is for each committee to clarify what needs full Board action, what needs management follow-up, and what should come back with an owner and date. If we do this well, full Board time can focus on decisions, risks, and strategic direction rather than reworking issues that belong first in committee.

Looking Ahead

For the next several meetings, I expect our work to center on Petit, Central security, Strategic Pathways implementation, committee follow-through, and improving the Board's decision materials.

My goal is for the Board to stay focused on strategy, oversight, public trust, fiscal stewardship, and the places where trustee action can genuinely help.