



**OWOSSO CARNEGIE LIBRARY PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

**June 25, 2026 at 6 PM at Owosso City Hall**

**Call to order:**

**Roll Call**

Present:

Absent:

**Agenda and Minutes:**

Motion to approve June 25, 2026 agenda

Motion to approve May 28, 2026 meeting minutes

**Agenda Items:**

1. Committee Questions from May 28 Meeting
2. HDC Historic District Boundary Expansion
3. Parking Discussion with Adjacent Property Owner

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**Public Comment**

**Member Comment**

**Next Meeting:** July 23, 2026 @ 6 PM

**Adjourn**



## OWOSSO CARNEGIE LIBRARY PROPERTY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OWOSSO CARNEGIE LIBRARY PROPERTY COMMITTEE May 28, 2026, at 6 PM at Owosso City Hall

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: at 6:00 p.m.

#### Roll Call

Present: Chairman Rob Teich, Vice Chairman Justin Horvath, Piper Brewer, Gary Wilson, Sean Harrington, and Amy Fuller, City Liaison (filling in for Nathan Henne, non-voting).

Absent: Jeff Ferweda and Tom Cook.

#### Agenda and Minutes:

Motion to approve May 28, 2026 agenda by Harrington. Seconded by Horvath. Ayes all. Motion carried.

Motion to approve April 23, 2026 meeting minutes by Brewer. Seconded by Harrington. Ayes all. Motion carried.

#### Agenda Items:

1. Review of Library Expenses and MISC inquiries:
  - a. The committee heard from City Attorney Scott Gould on the quiet title process. There was discussion and questions for the City Attorney regarding this process. **There was a motion to recommend to Owosso City Council moving forward with the quiet title process by Horvath. Supported by Harrington. Ayes all. Motion carried.**
  - b. There was discussion on library expenses. The committee had the following questions for staff to research: Piper Brewer asked about the \$75,000 budgeted for pipes, and Gary Wilson asked if the city has to contribute \$10,000 per year in maintenance per an agreement with Carnegie.
2. Review of Historic District Boundaries and Options: The Committee discussed the option of adding the library to the Downtown Historic District as both a preservation measure and to help with future grant opportunities. **There was a motion by Horvath to encourage the Historic District Commission to include the library in the district as a stand-alone contributing property. Seconded by Brewer. Ayes all. Motion carried.**
3. Review of Zoning and Parking Requirements: Committee members asked staff to research the actual square footage of the building and to inquire with the funeral home

next door about leasing or purchasing parking space. **There was a motion by Horvath to authorize the City Manager to investigate options for acquiring parking or leasing parking from Watkins Brothers, including the green space located at the NE corner of their property. Seconded by Brewer. Ayes all. Motion carried.**

**Public Comment** None.

**Member Comment** Piper Brewer noted the lease expiration date. Justin Horvath stated that the reason for his three motions this evening was that he thought it was important that the committee show they are taking action. Gary Wilson shared that he thought it was important to consider how the Woodard family could be honored.

**Next Meeting:** June 25, 2026 @ 6 PM

**Adjourned:** at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Fuller, Assistant City Manager



## CITY OF OWOSSO MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Owosso Library Committee  
**FROM:** City Manager  
**DATE:** June 18, 2026  
**RE:** Responses to Committee Questions from the May 28, 2026 Meeting

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### **I. Steam Pipe Replacement Cost**

Piper asked about the \$75,000 budgeted for pipe replacement and requested clarification of the total project cost and scope. This figure was never part of the City's adopted annual budget. It appeared only as a placeholder in the City's six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) adopted in 2025, a planning document that does not appropriate funds. The 2026 CIP update superseded that plan and removed this project following the District Library's announced move. The original \$75,000 figure was an estimate made by the City Manager; some of the building's steam pipes are extensively patched. The City and Library ultimately determined that air conditioning system replacement was the higher priority and pursued that project instead, which Mauer completed in early 2022 at a bid of \$67,266.

### **II. Carnegie Maintenance Pledge**

Gary asked whether Owosso, like other communities that received Carnegie library grants, was required to commit to \$10,000 annually for maintenance, and whether the City meets that obligation. Carnegie library grants generally required recipient communities to pledge an annual maintenance contribution from taxation equal to roughly ten percent of the construction grant. Applied to Owosso's original \$20,000 Carnegie grant, that pledge would have amounted to roughly \$2,000 per year. Today, the City owns the library, and Shiawassee District Library funds its operations, including the Owosso branch, through a voter-approved district library millage rather than a City general-fund appropriation. The lease agreement between the City and SDL further establishes a financial maintenance support structure between the two parties. This tax-based funding arrangement satisfies, and significantly exceeds, the original pledge. In a strict sense, the 1913 pledge was a one-time condition for releasing the construction grant, fulfilled when the library opened in 1914, and no ongoing compliance mechanism survives from that era. The only currently enforceable legal instrument tied to the property is the Woodard family land reverter clause, addressed by the City Attorney in detail at the May 28 meeting, which is unrelated to library funding.

#### **IV. Square Footage Discrepancy**

The Committee noted a discrepancy between the square footage figures previously provided and Library Director Kimberly White's figure of 8,000 square feet (4,000 square feet per floor). The City's earlier estimate was generated using the County's GIS measurement tool. Ms. White's figure is accepted as the more reliable number for the Committee's purposes going forward.

#### **V. Parking Acquisition from Adjacent Property**

The Committee asked whether parking could be acquired from Watkins Funeral Home, whether the funeral home would lease a portion of its parking, or whether it might sell the separate parcel it currently holds as green space. This question is addressed together with the related committee motion in a separate memo on this agenda. In short, any conversation with adjacent property owners is premature until the Committee finalizes and forwards its recommendation on the highest and best use of the library property to City Council. The part of the motion directing city staff to approach Watkins to see if they would sell a portion of their parcel is not within the powers of the committee but with the city council alone. The committee has a briefing on the zoning rules of different potential uses. Based on the final recommendation's adoption by city council, the council will have the opportunity at that time whether to embark on negotiations for property acquisition.



## CITY OF OWOSSO MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Owosso Library Committee  
**FROM:** City Manager  
**DATE:** June 18, 2026  
**RE:** HDC Historic District Boundary Expansion — Carnegie Library Property

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### **I. Historic District Status**

Following a thorough review of all City of Owosso ordinances and resolutions enacted from 2010 (the year in which the Owosso Historic District was established) through the date of this memorandum it has been confirmed that the Carnegie Library property located at 502 West Main Street is not included within the boundaries of the current Owosso Local Historic District. No subsequent effort has amended the district boundaries to include the library parcel.

### **II. National Register of Historic Places Status**

The library property is not individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), nor is it a contributing resource within any NRHP-listed historic district in Shiawassee County. A review of the complete National Park Service inventory of NRHP-listed properties in Shiawassee County, Michigan that the Carnegie Library / Shiawassee District Library at 502 West Main Street does not appear among the listed properties.

### **III. Status of the Boundary Expansion Process**

At its May 28, 2026 meeting, the Committee passed a motion encouraging the Historic District Commission (HDC) to include the library building in the Owosso Local Historic District as a stand-alone contributing property. The HDC will consider formal action to begin the boundary expansion process at its July meeting, and City Council has been made aware of this intention.

It is legally possible to add the Carnegie Library property to the Owosso Local Historic District even though the property is currently situated entirely outside the existing district boundaries. Michigan Public Act 169 of 1970 (as amended), the Local Historic Districts Act, provides a defined process for boundary amendments, including expansions to incorporate properties not contiguous with an existing district. That process generally requires the following steps:

1. Initiation of the boundary amendment by a property owner, the Historic District Commission (HDC), or the governing body.

2. Appointment of a Historic District Study Committee to evaluate whether the property meets the criteria for historic significance under PA 169. I will be recommending that council appoint the sitting HDC commission to act as the survey committee.
3. The committee then undertakes the survey and documentation of the property's historic and architectural significance.
4. A public hearing held by the governing body prior to final action.
5. Notification to and review by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
6. Amendment of the City's historic district ordinance by the governing body to reflect the revised boundaries.

This approach would place the library property under the jurisdiction of the HDC with respect to exterior alterations, demolition, and new construction.

#### **IV. Burden and Likelihood of Denial**

This section responds to the Committee's question regarding how significant a burden the boundary expansion would impose and what the likelihood of denial would be. The procedural burden is moderate but manageable. The steps outlined above, study committee appointment, survey and documentation, a public hearing, and SHPO notification, typically take several months to complete, but the City already administers a Local Historic District and has the institutional capacity to carry out each step. Direct costs are generally limited to staff and HDC commissioners' time for documentation and survey work. Because the City owns the property and both Council and the HDC have already expressed support for this direction, the principal risk in this case is procedural rather than outright denial.

#### **V. Deed Restrictions as a Contingency**

Should the boundary expansion not move forward, or should the Committee wish to retain a fallback option, a potentially simpler and less burdensome alternative would be to negotiate and record deed restrictions on the library property in connection with any future sale of the parcel. Deed restrictions are private legal instruments that run with the land and bind subsequent owners to specified conditions without imposing ongoing government regulatory oversight.

Such restrictions could include provisions prohibiting demolition of the building's historic exterior features, requiring that any exterior alterations or additions be compatible with the building's historic character, and/or mandating consultation with a preservation professional prior to significant physical changes. Because the restrictions would be contractual rather than regulatory, this approach avoids adding another layer of government regulation to the property while still providing protection for the historic Carnegie Library building.



## CITY OF OWOSSO MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Owosso Library Committee  
**FROM:** City Manager  
**DATE:** June 18, 2026  
**RE:** Neighboring Property Acquisition Process - Adjacent Parking Motion

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### **I. Background — Committee Motion and Subject Property**

At its May 28, 2026 meeting, the Committee passed a motion authorizing the City Manager to investigate options for acquiring or leasing parking spaces from Watkins Funeral Home, an adjacent property owner. The inquiry stems from the Committee's interest in whether additional parking capacity could be secured for the library property, either through a lease of a portion of the funeral home's existing parking area or through acquisition of a separate parcel the funeral home currently holds as green space.

### **II. Authority to Negotiate Real Property Transactions**

Under the City Charter and Michigan municipal law, authority to negotiate, enter into, or direct staff to pursue the acquisition or lease of real property rests with the City Council, not with an advisory committee. The Library Committee was established to study and recommend a highest and best use for the Carnegie Library property; it does not hold independent authority to authorize negotiations for adjacent real estate, nor can it direct the City Manager to undertake such negotiations on the City's behalf. Any binding commitment regarding the acquisition or lease of property from Watkins Funeral Home would require Council action.

### **III. Status of the May 28 Motion**

The motion is addressed in part. Consistent with the Committee's request, the City Manager has reviewed the matter as a question of municipal authority and operations, and that review is reflected in this memorandum. The portion of the motion seeking to authorize entry into negotiations for real property, or directing the City Manager to do so, exceeds the Committee's authority. And Council would be advised that pursuing such negotiations at this stage is premature.

### **IV. Sequencing — Why Acquisition Discussions Are Premature**

Before any conversation with adjacent property owners is appropriate, the Committee must first complete and forward to Council its recommendation on the highest and best use of the library property. The Committee is encouraged to put forward a single, solid recommendation rather than a list of options, consistent with Council's original direction in forming this Committee. Should Council

reject the recommendation, it may ask the Committee to consider additional uses at that time. Only after Council acts on the Committee's recommendation, or otherwise directs further action, such as disbanding the Committee, determining that additional space is not needed, or deciding to sell the property outright, would it be appropriate to approach Watkins Funeral Home or any other neighboring property owner regarding parking or land acquisition. If the ultimate direction from Council is to sell the property, expansion of the parcel would more appropriately be a matter for a future developer to pursue; if the direction is to retain and redevelop the property, expanding the site could instead be a step the City takes to make the property more marketable to potential developers.

## **V. Zoning Context and Parking Requirements**

The following information was provided to the Committee at the May 28, 2026 meeting and is included here because the question of whether additional parking is necessary, and how much, cannot be answered without first knowing the recommended use. The parking analysis makes clear that this is not a marginal decision — the magnitude of the parking requirement swings dramatically depending on what use is ultimately selected, reinforcing why the sequencing outlined in Section IV is critical.

### **Current Zoning and Parking Inventory**

The Carnegie Library property at 502 W. Main Street is zoned Central Business District (CBD). The City owns the parking lot adjacent to the building, which contains 28 spaces including the designated handicap-accessible space. That lot currently serves as the primary off-street parking for library patrons and staff, and ADA accessibility to the building through the parking lot is below code requirements. The CBD zoning ordinance (Sec. 38-183(2)(b)) provides flexibility in that parking requirements may be satisfied by spaces within 500 feet of the building entrance, including open public parking lots and on-street parking, but the extent to which such off-site capacity is available and credited would require a full parking supply and demand analysis.

### **Parking Requirements by Use**

The following is a summary of parking requirements under Sec. 38-185 of the Zoning Ordinance for the existing use and two hypothetical alternative uses applied to the building's 8,000 sq. ft. floor area, compared against the 28 spaces currently available in the adjacent City-owned lot.

**Public Library (existing use):** 1 space per 200 sq. ft. GFA plus employees = 40+ spaces required. Current deficit: 12+ spaces (approximately 30% short).

**Restaurant (hypothetical):** 114 to 133 spaces required depending on type and liquor license status. Deficit: 86 to 105 spaces. A restaurant use of the full building represents a significant parking challenge that would require substantial off-site parking agreements.

**10-Unit Residential Apartment Complex (hypothetical):** 18 to 30 spaces required depending on unit mix. A one- or two-bedroom unit mix fits comfortably within the existing 28-space lot, making residential use the scenario most compatible with the site's current parking capacity.

The contrast is significant. A restaurant use would create a parking deficit of between 72 and 105 spaces relative to what the existing lot can supply, while a residential use would be largely or fully satisfied by the existing lot. Any need for additional parking from adjacent property owners is therefore entirely contingent on what use the Committee recommends - yet another reason why that recommendation must come first.

USE	PARKING CALCULATION	# SPACES	Surplus / (Deficit)
Public Library (existing)	1/200 sq. ft. GFA + employees	40+ minimum	(12+) deficit
Restaurant w/ Liquor License	1/60 sq. ft. GFA (or 0.6/seat)	133	(105) deficit
Restaurant w/o Liquor License	1/70 sq. ft. GFA (or 0.5/seat)	114	(86) deficit
10-Unit Apt. – All 1-Bedroom	1.5/unit + 20% visitor	18	+10 surplus
10-Unit Apt. – All 2-Bedroom	2.0/unit + 20% visitor	24	+4 surplus
10-Unit Apt. – All 3+ Bedroom	2.5/unit + 20% visitor	30	(2) deficit

## **VI. Additional Considerations**

Before any feasibility analysis of acquiring parking from Watkins Funeral Home is undertaken, it would be worth confirming, from a zoning standpoint, whether the funeral home has surplus off-street parking capacity to offer in the first place; commercial parking requirements are typically calculated against a use's own demand, and a funeral home with sufficient parking to meet its own peak-occupancy needs may have little practical excess to lease or sell. Should Council ultimately vote to pursue this option, the process would likely involve a needs assessment tied to the Committee's recommended use, an appraisal of the relevant parcel or easement, and negotiation conducted with the possible help of the City Attorney's office, consistent with standard municipal real estate practice.