

# Alexandria Library Board Minutes

## Date

December 16, 2024

## Location

Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, Board Room

## Present

Trudi Hahn, Albert Moseley II, Libby Bawcombe, Dianne Fox, Oscar Fitzgerald, Canek Aguirre, Director  
Rose Dawson, Deputy Director Luis Labra, Division Chief Liz Achuff

Excused: Robert Ray IV

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 pm.

## Public Comment and Attendees

Greg Parks – Alexandria Library Foundation

Grant Rogers – City General Services

Patti Reilly – Duncan Friends report

Jenine Kotob – City General Services

Sarah Hill – Barrett Friends report

Lori Sebastian – Barrett Friends

Jean McKean - Burke Friends report

Nancy Porter – Burke Friends

Kay Brown – Beatley Friends report

Dar Davis – Beatley Friends

Michele Stork – Alexandria Library Foundation

Allison Carmola – Library staff

Jackie Crawford – Burke Friends

## General Services Presentation

City General Services staff gave a presentation on the proposed renovation of the downstairs area of the Burke branch. The proposed design includes a large meeting room, Makerspace, small mtg space, podcast space, 4 tutoring/study rooms, Makerspace storage room, Friends storage space, new arrival door, circulation space, and a new reception/waiting area.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about the budget, which is currently at \$750,000.

Chair Hahn asked about storage space for meeting room furniture. There is no dedicated storage space for this use in this plan. This may be included in a later phase.

The design includes a lot of glass for transparency and safety. This is in line with recent designs at other libraries. Ms. Bawcombe asked about sound design. Considerations include wall assembly, quieting materials (carpet, acoustic ceiling tiles), HVAC system considerations, and sound insulation within and on top of walls.

Timeline:

December 2024 – Design kickoff  
August 2025 – design submitted for permit approval  
September 2025 – general contractor selection  
October 2025 – construction starts  
April 2026 – construction completion  
May 2026 – move-in completion

Mr. Fitzgerald asked who provides feedback into the design? General Services works with Director Dawson and Deputy Director Labra. Labra advised there was a design meeting that included Friends members, Chair Hahn, and library staff. Director Dawson added that Burke community feedback was also incorporated. Mr. Fitzgerald asked why only half of the space is included in the design. General Services staff and Director Dawson explained that delays due to COVID and cost adjustments are limiting what can be done. Ms. Bawcombe noted that the current budget is \$200,000 less than previously discussed. Chair Hahn asked if furnishing are included – they are not. Director Dawson advised that they were never in the plan and the Foundation and Friends group would provide this. Mr. Fitzgerald confirmed that the Library Board will give final approval.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Bawcombe motioned to approve, Ms. Fox seconded, approved unanimously.

Chair’s report

Chair Hahn offered congratulations to Councilman Aguirre on his re-election to the City Council.

Ms. Stork arranged the Library participation in the Scottish Christmas Walk. Ms. Stork, Mr. Labra, Mr. Ray, Chair Hahn, and Ms. Bawcombe attended along with former staff member Brack Stovall. Video footage is available on the Facebook page

Last fall, former board member Karen Marshall retired from the U.S. Air Force. Chair Hahn attended the ceremony at Andrews Air Force Base.

Mr. Ashford from the Library Foundation board shared information regarding threats to libraries. Library materials in Alabama and in Front Royal, VA have been challenged.

Director’s Report:

For the month of October and November, the Alexandria Library distributed 751 and 407 COVID test kits respectively.

Monthly Activity Report (October)

- Overall patron count is up 16.2%
- Circulation remains relatively flat at 0.6% with ematerial increasing by 5.9%
- Increase in registered borrowers of 11.33%
- Decrease in eborrowers by -0.39%

- Wifi use is down 1.63% while our desktop computer usage is at 23%
- 313 passports processed at a value of almost \$11,000.
- 22 exams proctored at value of \$880.
- Hotspots (50) and Chromebook (150) usage
  - 57 Hotspots checked out
  - 28 Chromebooks checked out, 17 renewals

Director Activities:

Received an invitation to represent the Coretta Scott King (CSK) Book Award Committee at the funeral of Nikki Giovanni.

Asked to play Coretta Scott King in the citywide MLK celebration on January 15. Need to write a script.

Currently serving on the CSK Virginia Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award Committee. Will be attending ALA, LibLearnX Conference in January.

HR vacancies:

- Librarian II, Teen Librarian, Beatley
- Librarian III, Burke Branch Manager
- Librarian III, Youth Services, Beatley
- Librarian II, Barrett Library, retirement
- Librarian I, Youth services, Duncan
- Pages and Library Assts

Positions Filled

- Outreach Positions, 1.5 FTE, Patricia Amaya and Malik Greene
- IT Support Engineer: offer extended
- Librarian II, LH/SC, references
- Supervisory Custodian Position filled
- Librarian II, Youth Services, Duncan: offer extended

We will be posting vacancies on social media and other library websites.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if this is more vacancies than we've had in a long time. Director Dawson replied that the number of professional positions coming up vacant at the same time is interesting, but otherwise it's not unusual. Ms. Bawcombe asked if Director Dawson was able to say anything more about the Burke Branch Manager's departure. The reply was personal reasons.

Facilities

Beatley Library

- 98% of common areas are done. Still have Branch Manager's office to finish downstairs. Most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor offices need to be painted.

- Brick work still needs to be done outside of the building and they will begin working on the entrance and the doors after the new year.

#### Burke Library

Presentation from General Services about phasing in the work from Little, the architects/contractors, for the renovation of the Burke first floor.

#### Barrett Library

Met with Barrett staff to discuss how they would like to spend the \$10,000 they will receive from the Sandra Blake estate for excellent customer service. Director Dawson has a list of items that will benefit all of the staff, with a primary focus on updating the staff break room.

A public question was asked about the status of a Barrett meeting room. Director Dawson replied that the Foundation funding isn't there yet.

#### Programs

Director Dawson said she must applaud the staff for the timely and seasonal displays, from the Winter Reading Programs, the DIY Sustainable Gift Wrapping Kits, to the Preschool STEAM Sunday programs.

The staff are currently working with the City Attorney's office to create a policy for the board's approval pertaining to the 85<sup>th</sup> sit-in Anniversary traveling exhibit. Mr. Fitzgerald asked about the process for the travelling exhibit. Director Dawson explained that there is some complexity in setting it up (policy, cases, weight, shipping).

Councilman Aguirre advised that there is no update on the parking lot and will follow up with the City Manager.

#### Treasurer's report:

- We are 33.09% through the first four months of the fiscal year.
- We have spent 31.56% of the operating budget.
- To date, we have received the second installed payment budgeted for State Aid funds and have expensed 58.92% of the original budgeted amount.
- The Library has collected \$73,512.83 (24.84%) of its requirement of \$295,892 in Fees Revenue. Passports income continues to be strong – outstanding. Fee-generating services are still being used (printing, etc.). Mr. Fitzgerald asked about fees. Director Dawson responded that fees have not been eliminated, but the Library is still working to reduce fees as much as possible. Fee income may be up due to a recent upgrade to the printing terminals.

#### Investment report:

- As of November 30, 2024 the year to date portfolio performance was 15.11% compared to the benchmark of 14.59%. The 12-month performance was 20.92% as compared to the benchmark of 20.32%
- As of November 30, 2024 the YTD marker value of the Library's investment account was \$4,209,550.

Old business:

FY 26 Budget: The Director and Division Chief met with the Office of Management and Budget, Race and Social Equity, and the Deputy City Manager on December 11 to discuss the Library budget submission. The City required a 1% reduction of \$91K. We provided clarity concerning the increase in passport applications which required a part-time position and the willingness to give up a part-time page position. Current capacity for passport processing has been reached, but the additional part-time person will create more slots. The additional revenue will pay for that part-time salary and also provide additional revenue. Removing a vacant page position makes up the remaining 1% reduction required by the City. When asked why we didn't meet last year's target, Director Dawson explained that passport processing staff had mandatory leave due to excessive accruals so the Library had to reduce available timeslots to accommodate their schedules. The Library hopes to partner with the citizenship event hosts in Alexandria and Fairfax to offer timeslots specifically for new citizens. DCM Jon Lambert is very supportive of that idea and would like to see the Library become the passport processing center for NOVA.

Chair Hahn asked about the budget timelines provided in the packet, specifically opportunities for public comment. Director Dawson suggests waiting to see what the City Manager approves on February 25, 2025. If the supplemental request for hotspots is not included, Board and community support would be appreciated. If it is included, please thank the City for the support.

Councilman Canek motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald, and passed unanimously at 5:18pm.