

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

February 27, 2025

Location

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

Present

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

Excused: Canek Aguirre

The meeting was called to order at 4:04pm

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Bawcombe motioned to approve the minutes as amended, Mr. Moseley seconded, Mr. Ray abstained, all others approved.

Public Comment and Attendees

Patti Reilly – President, Duncan Friends – report attached

Kay Brown – President, Beatley Friends – report attached

Jean McKean – President, Burke Friends – report attached

David Williams

Allison Carmola – Adult Services, Beatley

Nancy Porter – Treasurer, Burke Friends

Bonnie Brown – Deputy City Attorney

Cheran Ivery – City Attorney

Dani Walker – Spring2ACTion Coordinator, Alexandria Library Foundation

Pat Smith – President, Alexandria Library Company

Dar Davis – Beatley Friends

Ava Avila

Shekinah Reynolds – HR Director, Alexandria Library

Presentation by Cheran Ivery, City Attorney

Ms. Ivery presented information about the composition and scope of the City Attorney's Office and its relationship to the Library.

Chair's Report: Trudi Hahn

Ms. Hahn acknowledged the presence of the Friends groups at the meeting. She gave a brief history of her time on the Board and advised that this will be her last meeting. She also

encouraged the Board to remain vigilant for attempts to ban books. Lastly, she thanked Director Dawson and the Board.

Point of Personal Privilege – Vice Chair Ray

Mr. Ray read a resolution commending Chair Hahn for her service and dedication to the Library and the Board and presented her with a Library Read poster.

Director's Report: Rose Dawson

Director Dawson reported for the months of December and January, despite the COVID decline, the Alexandria Library still distributed 393 and 318 test kits respectively. Current covid kits expire in April, and new kits will not be available from the government, so the Library may not be able to continue to provide kits.

Monthly Activity Report (**January**): Several snow days impacted overall usage and Beatley reference desk and large meeting room were closed due to construction.

- Overall patron count is up 11.5%
- Slight decline in circulation -2.7% with ematerial decreasing by -3.2%
- Increase in registered borrowers of 11.44%
- Increase in eborrowers 0.26%
- Wi-Fi use is down -4.10%
- 436 passports processed. Value of more than \$15,260
- 16 exams proctored at value of \$640.
- Hotspots (50) and Chromebook (60) usage
 - 49 hotspots checked out
 - 26 Chromebooks checked out, 41 renewals

Director Activities:

- Played the role of Coretta Scott King at the City MLK Celebration in January.
- Attended ALA LibLearnX Conference as 1 of 5 African American library leaders (Vegas, Baltimore, Chicago, Charlotte, etc.) discussing the potential effect the new administration could have on the Librarian of Congress and eventually the profession. The Librarian of Congress term expires in March 2026.
- Last Sunday, did a sit-in presentation for Hillcrest Baptist Church. They were celebrating their church library and wanted to recognize Director Dawson as the first black librarian of Alexandria.

HR vacancies: Director Dawson commented that the library was receiving lots of applications for positions that do not require the MLS. She then listed current Library vacancies.

- Librarian III Youth Services Manager
- Librarian II, Barrett Library
- Librarian III, Burke
- Staff Engineer, IT
- Librarian I, Duncan
- Circulation Supervisor, Duncan
- Several paging, Lib Aide, and custodian positions.

Facilities

Beatley Library:

- There is scaffolding at the front of the building. The crew is ready to remove the front door and glass. Patrons will enter through the meeting room, which prevents usage of that space for 3-4 days.
- Unfortunately, the Reading Garden cost exceeds \$100k and Don Manthey (General Services) informed us he must write an RFP and it go out for bid, which delays this project even further.

Burke Library: renovation is back on track.

Duncan Library: the landscaping MOU between the Master gardeners and the city was forwarded from Parks and Recreation who asked for the Library as the receiving department to weigh in.

Programs:

- Immigration and the Library: On Friday, Deputy Director Luis and Director Dawson met with the City Attorney and 3 of her staff did a tour of the Beatley library and discussed signage and what staff should do if Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were to come into the libraries, specifically if we have a program (ELL, Storytime, etc.) going on in our meeting rooms. Key staff, 20-25, would receive training on Thursday, February 13. They were impressed with our existing signage, Library behavior policies, and meeting room use policies. All policies are cleared through the City Attorney's office prior to Library Board approval.
- Teleworking: The City is reviewing its existing Telework Policy in light of the recent changes made by the federal government. The library, because of the need to always have enough staff to cover its public facing services, is also reviewing its procedures. For example, the City policy stated anyone who did not supervise would be allowed to work from home up to 2 days a week. Many staff took this language to mean they were "entitled." The language in the library procedures stated that while they "may request," 1-2 days, depending on their job duties, the library would evaluate each request based on operational needs to determine eligibility. In the recent past, telework flexibility was discussed during the hiring process because it allowed for the ability to compete for highly qualified candidates.
- Global Entry Programs: Representative Don Beyer's office had been hosting Global Entry Events in our libraries. It is important to note that the March and May events at Beatley have been scheduled by the US Customs and Border Protection staff from Dulles Airport and no longer Rep Beyer's office. Global Entry is a program of the US Customs and Border Protection service that allows preapproved, low-risk travelers to receive expedited clearance upon arrival into the US through automatic kiosks at select airports and via the [SENTRI](#) and [NEXUS](#) lanes by land and sea.
- The Director applauds library staff for the George Washington displays, Winter Reading Challenge and Black History Month programs this month. The oral histories recorded

during the Black Family Reunion events were released via social media and have been well received. The Library was also included in the City's Black History Month event.

Mr. Moseley asked if the oral histories will go to the City. Director Dawson replied that this can be discussed.

Ms. Bawcombe asked if the recommendations from the City Attorney's office were available. Director Dawson will share them with the Board. She also asked about programming/materials/awareness for people who have been laid off and may need access to resources. Director Dawson commented that she was aware of what Arlington and DC were doing and that the City is looking at options for Alexandria. Ms. Bawcombe noted we may have Federal employees who had never applied to private sector jobs before. Director Dawson said the Library is considering bringing someone in to do a presentation. Computers and hotspots remain available for checkout for those who need access to these technologies.

Chair Hahn asked if the Reading Garden would be fully restored. Beatley Library has restricted funds specifically designated for the Reading Garden, but the library is waiting for construction work to finish so that work can begin. Director Dawson shared that the Library just found out it will likely have to go out for bid because it's over \$100k. Director Dawson will verify this. If so, this will affect the timeline. Kay Brown (Beatley Friends) shared that they are providing funds for plantings.

Ms. Bawcombe asked if the pause in federal grant funding will affect the Library. Director Dawson responded that the Library only received State Aid. The Library of Virginia keeps all the federal funding for libraries, and while they will be impacted greatly, the main impact on the Alexandria Library is likely to be indirect, primarily with the potential loss of the resources on the Find It Virginia website.

Treasurer's Report: Albert Moseley

Mr. Moseley reported that income is at 48.42% through the first six months of the fiscal year. Total expenses are at 45.50% of the annual budget. To date, we have received the third installed payment for State Aid funds and have expensed 67.04% of the original budgeted amount. The Library has collected \$110,437 or 37.32% of its requirement of \$295,892 in Fees Revenue.

Investment Report: Robert Ray

Mr. Ray reported that as of December 31, 2024, the year to date portfolio performance was 11.96%, compared to the benchmark of 11.41%. The inception to date performance was 5.95% as compared to the benchmark of 5.37%. As of December 31, 2024, the YTD market value of the Library's investment account was \$4,074,692.

Mr. Ray asked if the Board had any advice they wanted to direct toward the Truist investment manager at this time. He requested email input.

Old Business

Budget: Director Dawson reminded the Board that the City Manager released the proposed city budget Tuesday night, February 25. A town hall meeting to discuss the budget was also held at the Library that evening. She shared that the Library is pleased with the draft budget. Work sessions in which each department comes before City Council to discuss the budget would be held in March. The Library's session is scheduled for 3/17/25 at 7pm. The Library request for funding for additional hotspots has been approved in the draft budget. The Library's required budget reduction removes one paging position but adds a library assistant position for passport processing (revenue generation). The revenue generated by the increased passport processing capacity will pay the salary for this position and provide additional revenue. Director Dawson described the budget approval process. Mr. Ray mentioned cost of living increases tied to positions, framed in a matrix of how the city pays its employees. The Library stays within those bands. Will Library staff be paid in line with cost of living increases for city staff? Director Dawson advised the proposed budget includes a 1% increase for non-bargaining unit employees plus a step increase. Mr. Labra advised that there is a classification study scheduled for 2026 which includes implementation funding. The Library budget will be at \$10M for the first time in FY26 – Director Dawson thanked the Board for their help in achieving this milestone. Mr. Fitzgerald expressed concern about comparisons to surrounding areas.

New Business

Director Dawson requested a Library closure for Staff Day on May 16, 2025. Mr. Moseley motioned to approve, seconded by Ms. Fox, and passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Mr. Fitzgerald motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Ray, and passed unanimously at 5:34pm.