

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

December 18, 2023

Location

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

Present

Trudi B. Hahn, Robert Ray IV, Patsy Rogers, Dianne Fox, Oscar Fitzgerald, Director Dawson, Deputy Director Labra, Division Chief Gates

Excused

Albert Moseley II, Canek Aguirre

The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.

Public Comment

Libby Bawcombe, Vice President/Membership for the Friends of Duncan Library, presented the attached report which was added into the official meeting record.

Jean McCain, President of the Burke Branch Friends, presented the attached report which was added into the official meeting record.

The Beatley Friends group provided the attached written report which was added into the official meeting record.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Ray to approve the October 16, 2023 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald and was passed unanimously.

Chair's Report

Chair Hahn thanked the Board, Friends and other Library supporters for attending the Scottish Christmas Walk on December 2 and shared a photo of the event. Chair Hahn stated that the meeting would focus on the results of the Library staff compensation study and thanked Ms. Bawcombe for testifying at a November City Council hearing on that topic.

Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the patron count was up 13.5% over the previous year as the Library worked to return to pre-pandemic levels. Overall, circulation was slightly down (-3.3%) with e-materials remaining flat. She reported that website/page visits as well as workstation usage had decreased due to the data incident, but that wireless usage was up. Approximately 250 passports were processed and the Chromebooks and hotspots were well used.

Director Dawson stated that programs in 2024 will focus on the themes of bravery and courage in honor of the 85th anniversary of the 1939 Alexandria Library Sit-In. The staff anniversary committee chose the specific theme: *Telling our Story: A Legacy of Courage*. The annual theme would kick off on January 11 when Director Dawson will serve as the keynote speaker for the City of Alexandria staff celebration in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It would be closely followed by the Library's participation in the Kellogg Foundation National Day of Racial Healing. Director Dawson reported that she will serve on a panel entitled "The 1939 Library Sit-In & Today's Fight for Access to Books" at the Southeast/Southwest EDU conference in Austin, Texas on March 5, 2024.

Director Dawson reported that work continues on the Beatley Library building envelope project. She also reported that the leaks in the Board room had been repaired and that other leak repairs were ongoing. Director Dawson thanked the Friends of the Beatley Library for committing funds to help replace the trellis in the Reading Garden.

Director Dawson reported that the Library received a summary of cybersecurity recommendations from the incident team which had responded to and investigated the recent Library data incident. Given the recommendations, the Library will procure additional equipment and will make corrections and adjustments to its policies and procedures. The Library will implement a new firewall solution, an endpoint detection and monitoring system for its network, and a new backup solution in addition to other improvements. A FY25 supplemental budget request was submitted to help pay for the annual ongoing costs of those recommended enhancements.

Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Fitzgerald reported on Mr. Moseley’s behalf that as of November 30, 2023, the Library was 42% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 35% of its operating budget. The Library received 64% of budgeted State Aid funds and expended 75% of the original annual budgeted amount. On November 26, 2023, the Library was officially notified of an increase of \$66,346 to its FY24 State Aid award. The Library collected \$79,407 or 38% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$17,345 or 43% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of November 30, 2023, the market value of the Library’s investment account was \$3,564,119. The quarter to date portfolio performance was 4.53% as compared to the benchmark of 4.73%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was 6.41%, as compared to the benchmark of 7.69%.

Old Business – FY25 Budget Update

Director Dawson presented a summary of the Library’s FY25 operating budget submission to the City Manager, including a description of the mandatory 1% reduction (-\$85,892). She explained that instead of reducing services to meet that reduction target, the Library would increase passport revenue by adding 2,500 passport appointments. Director Dawson outlined the elements of the Cybersecurity Enhancements request, including the request to add a full-time position to the Library’s IT staff. She stated that the Outreach proposal had been submitted last year as well, highlighting that the dedicated staff is needed now that the Library has a new outreach vehicle. Likewise, Director Dawson reported that the Library had included a request to permanently fund the mobile hotspot and Chromebook lending program, noting that Alexandria Library would be the only system in the region without such a program if funding were not continued. The original program funding came from City grants related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Those budget requests were summarized in the chart below.

	Reduction/Additional Revenue	Amount
	Increase Passport Revenue (add appointments at Beatley and Barrett)	-\$85,892
Priority	Supplemental Requests	Amount
1	Cybersecurity Enhancements & IT Infrastructure/Staffing	\$182,790
2	Dedicated Outreach Team	\$ 58,212
3	Mobile Hotspot & Chromebook Lending	\$ 30,222
	Total Supplemental Cost	\$271,224

Chair Hahn asked if the Library would be preparing talking points for the Board and Friends groups for advocacy purposes. Director Dawson said that talking points would be provided in late February after the City Manager had made his decisions on what to include in the FY25 operating budget.

Old Business – Compensation Update

Director Dawson thanked the City Manager, the City Human Resources Department, and HR specialist Kathy Reed for their hard work on the Library compensation study. Director Dawson reported that the study concluded that compensation for the Library Assistant (I, II, III), Library Operations Supervisor and Librarian (I, II, III, IV) classifications would be increased by 5% - 15%, depending on job class. The Library Associate classification would be removed and replaced with the new classification of Library Assistant IV. Director Dawson presented detailed slides on the recommendations which were entered into the formal meeting record.

Director Dawson reported that the City Manager had already approved the compensation increases based on the study and that the changes would be made in the current fiscal year, likely to be effective in the first pay period of January 2024. Director Dawson stated that she still had concerns with one or two positions, although she was very pleased with the overall result of the study and the quick implementation by the City Manager's office and the Human Resources Department. She reported that the changes were very positively received by staff.

The Board voted to accept the results of the market analysis and compensation study recently completed by the City's Department of Human Resources and to send a letter of thanks to the City Manager for his efforts on behalf of Library staff. The motion was made by Dianne Fox, seconded by Robert Ray IV and approved unanimously.

New Business – Banking Services

Director Dawson asked Division Chief Gates to make the Board aware of a planned banking change for the Library. Ms. Gates explained that the Library reviewed its banking needs and had determined that its current vendor was not able to support all of those needs, particularly in the areas of fraud prevention and audit controls. In addition, the Library needed a full treasury solution with multi-level role permissions and more robust reporting and account structuring options. Ms. Gates explained that multiple vendors were reviewed, but that Truist offered the best combination of services and location. She stated that the additional cost of the new banking services would be approximately \$200 per month. Given that slight increase in cost and the shift of banking vendor, staff wanted to make the Board aware of the planned change.

Adjournment

Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:27pm. That motion was seconded by Ms. Fox and approved unanimously.

Friends of Duncan Library

www.FriendsOfDuncanLibrary.org

Alexandria Library Board Meeting — Dec. 18, 2023 — Libby Bawcombe, Advocacy Chair

Thank You: Thank you to the Board for encouraging updates and input from the Friends groups.

Biggest Concern: Staff compensation

- We have not heard any news about the release of findings from the compensation study related to fair pay, or resulting actions, like increases, that could be put into place. We are aware that the FY25 budget planning process is underway, and we're scaling efforts toward those timelines.

Duncan Branch and Duncan Friends Updates:

- The Duncan Friends Board just approved the budget for FY24 for around \$60,000. The larger expenses requested from Branch Manager Kayla Payne, which we'll support, are these:
 - \$16,000 for adult books.
 - \$4,000 for adult programs.
 - \$25,000 for children's/youth books.
 - \$5,500 for youth services programs and materials.
 - \$3,000 for Summer Quest.
 - \$4,000 for equipment, furniture and supplies.
- Councilmember Gaskins visited Duncan on Nov. 28. Executive Director Rose Dawson, Deputy Director Luis Labra, Duncan Branch Manager Kayla Payne and I surfaced concerns. Gaskins asked about the role libraries play, what Duncan could do with more funds, and offered her help.
- Duncan Friends conducted our annual planning meeting in November, where we set our mission, intentions, and brainstormed tactics for FY24, via design thinking facilitation methods.
- Dec. 14 was our annual Holiday Party. We invited the AL Board, City Council and City Manager.
- Four new Duncan Friends Board Officers and Chairs are rolling on Jan. 1, 2024.

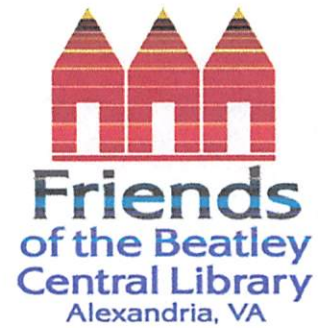
Advocacy and Outreach:

- Recent advocacy efforts to raise awareness about fair pay:
 - I gave a statement during the [Nov. 18 City Council Public Hearing](#).
 - We began an effort in the community to raise awareness and encourage sending messages to City Council during budget planning season:
 - Evergreen webpage: <https://www.friendsofduncanlibrary.org/fair-pay/>
 - Email campaign urging community to [send a message to City Council](#).
 - Social media posts.
 - Printed flyers in Duncan Branch.
- An outreach effort is underway for Duncan Friends to connect more with our Spanish-speaking community, to see how we can provide access, services, programming and materials.

Beatley Friends Report for Alexandria Library Board

December 2023

Kay Brown, incoming President



Recent Support for Beatley Branch

- Volunteers provided 256 volunteer hours, valued at \$6,400
- \$1321 for children's programs, including headphones for Girls Who Code, various activities for Hispanic Heritage month, youth services programming, and books with high holds
- \$885 for adult programs, including cardiac dance fitness, Latin dance instructors, and various outreach activities

2024 Budget

- 2024 budget is just over \$200,000
- Includes:
 - Funding for purchases that could not be completed in 2023, such as a white board in the small conference room
 - Additional funding for the reading garden renovation
 - Provisions to replace 40 well-used fabric chairs with easier to clean faux leather chairs

Advocacy

- Library staff compensation
 - Board members sent messages to City Council
 - We will be communicating more broadly with our membership
- Participated in the Alexandria Scottish Christmas Walk

Other

- New president and vice president in January
- Super Friends group is meeting separately after this meeting

Burke Branch Friends Report
Alexandria Library Board Meeting

- December 18, 2023
Beatley Library

*Next Board Meeting: January, 11, 2024

- Thank you for the opportunity to report to the Alexandria Library Board

- Biggest Concern

- Still in need of a Branch Manager, we have been without a manager since June.

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- Book Sales/Special Events

- Next Book Sale is scheduled for February 29-March 3.

- Advocacy and Outreach

- An email was sent to membership requesting that messages be forwarded to the City in support of fair pay for Library Staff.

- * Coming Up

- Working on our 2024 Budget, staff department requests have been submitted.

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It is with sadness that I report the death of one of Burke's long time Friends, Patricia "Chee" Becker on Thursday, December 7, 2023. Chee was known for her love of children's programs, working tirelessly on March Madness Book Sale programs. She served as Board Treasurer for many years until her retirement January 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean McKean
President, Burke Branch Friends,