

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

October 21, 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 4:03 pm.

Public Comment and Attendees

Patti Reilly, Duncan Friends President Report (attached)

Elaine Wick, Barrett Friends

Sarah Hill, Barrett Friends (Communications) Report (attached)

Dar Davis, Beatley Friends Report (attached)

Jean McKean, Burke Friends President (attached)

Ank Webbers (patron): thank you for online access to Webster's Dictionary.

Michele Stork, Alexandria Library Foundation

Allison Carmola, Beatley Librarian III

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Moseley moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilmember Aguirre, approved unanimously.

Chair's Report

No report.

Director's Report

In September the Library distributed 1,309 COVID test kits.

Summary of Monthly Activity Report:

- Patron count was up 12.3%
- Circulation count was up 4.2%
- Registered borrowers up 11%
- EBorrowers basically flat

- Slight decrease in our collections -0.49%
- Wireless usage was flat
- 342 passports processed, valued at \$11,970
- Desktop computers are in use only 24% of the time while hotspots were checked out 56 times and Chromebooks 24 times this month. Desktop usage decrease due to patrons bringing their own laptops.

Chairperson Hahn asked if there is a plan to repurpose desktops? Director Dawson clarified that the 10-year technology plan included replacement of desktops but as technology has improved, the future funding is likely to shift to Chromebook funding.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about the decrease in the library materials. Director Dawson explained that it could be due to the weeding process which verifies what is being circulated. The staff may have concentrated on a particular category or Dewey decimal number where a large number of those titles were not being checked out.

Programs:

As Hispanic Heritage Month comes to an end, anecdotally, we have had a terrific response from the community. The Hispanic Heritage Fiesta last week received lots of accolades, and our overall events received a lot of positive press.

Wrapping up the 85th Anniversary celebration, we had the *Legacy of Courage*, a concert series that took place on Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19, 4pm at the Charles Houston Recreation Center. This was a joint event with the City and Momentum Collective. The first day featured primarily youth performers celebrating the theme of Courage through song, poetry, and dance. The Saturday event was less well-attended than Friday because it competed with several popular citywide events.

Le' Tour d'Alexandria also took place on the morning of Saturday, October 19. There were twenty participants who were escorted by officers from the police and sheriff's office.

On Monday, October 23 and 5:30pm there will be PAWS in the Park.

Facilities

The kiosk project will not be happening this year as funding has not been received.

Facilities Master Plan:

Funding for the Library's Facilities Master Plan has been pushed out to FY 2029.

Beatley renovation work on the outside of the building continues. The majority of the glass has been installed but it is the necessary caulking and sealing that is taking place now. Unfortunately, this makes the offices unusable at times due to dust and fumes. They hope

to move forward on the front of the building followed by the interior work. At the last meeting we requested closing the facility Dec 2-6. Director Dawson requested approval to extend the closure to December 10 if needed. Councilmember Aguirre made a motion to allow the Director to extend the closure period, Mr. Moseley seconded, motion passed unanimously. Concerns were expressed regarding possible water damage from rain. So far it has not been an issue.

The Burke 1st floor renovation needs an updated plan as current funding of \$900k is not adequate for the current wish list. Mr. Fitzgerald requested clarification about the funding. Director Dawson explained that after the departure of the school system, the first-floor area was returned to the Library for use. Unfortunately, the necessary funding was never received (7 years ago) due to competing priorities in General Services. Based on the system that rates city buildings, Library buildings generally rate higher in building quality so receive lower priority. For example, most library buildings scored an A or B. Most recently, some have dropped to a C. Councilmember Aguirre supported this explanation and offered to speak to the city manager concerning Library funds for this project.

Presentations:

CFLeads Economic Mobility Action Network – ACT Board asked Director Dawson to serve on this committee. Chairperson Hahn asked for clarification of what the group is focusing on. Director Dawson explained that the group takes the lead on making recommendations for Community Foundation projects and potential funding.

Treasurer's Report

- We are 17% through the first two months of the fiscal year.
- We have spent 15.18% of the operating budget.
- To date, we have received the first installed payment budgeted for State Aid funds and have expensed 57.21% of the original budgeted amount. The Library typically spends the bulk of this budget early in the year, so this is expected.
- The Library has collected \$37,902 or 12.81% of its requirement of \$295,892 in Fees Revenue.

Investment Committee Report

As of September 30, 2024, the year-to-date portfolio performance was 12.60%, compared to the benchmark of 12.18%. The 12-month performance was 23.65% as compared to the benchmark of 23.03%. The YTD market value of the Library's investment account was \$4,129,705. In summary, the portfolio is performing a little better than the benchmark.

Old Business

FY26 Budget – Director Dawson distributed an additional handout: *Alexandria Library FY26 Recommended Library Budget Submission (draft)*. The Library is required to submit a 1% reduction, which equates to \$91,581. Supplemental requests must be designed to support prior commitments, maintain service levels, and meet state or federal mandates; support and advance the priorities set by City Council; and include prioritization if submitting multiple supplemental submissions.

The Library is planning to add a part-time staff position for passport processing, which would generate additional revenue to cover 2/3 of the 1% budget reduction required by the City. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the new online passport process might affect demand. Allison Carmola, Beatley Librarian who oversees the passport process clarified that online is renewals only, which the library doesn't process. Eliminating 2 paging positions makes up the other 1/3 of the required reduction. These positions can be covered by existing vacancies. Chairperson Hahn asked about the effect of this. Director Dawson responded that other pages can cover with additional hours. Deputy Director Labra shared that mobile hotspots are eligible for ERate. This program falls under the city council priority of "eliminating community disparities." The budget plan is due November 1st. A more significant write-up will be created for that submission and shared with the Board. Chairperson Hahn asked if formal Board approval is needed. Councilperson Aguirre made a motion, Mr. Moseley seconded. He then asked if there were additional supplementals. Director Dawson explained that there are no additional supplementals being requested. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

FY24 Audit – Director Dawson shared that the audit was clean. Credit to former division chief Laura Gates and fiscal analyst Johanna Seltzer for handling the audit on our behalf.

Adjournment

Councilmember Aguirre motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bawcombe, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:50P.M.