

# Alexandria Library Board Minutes

## Date

February 19, 2026

## Location

James M. Duncan, Jr. Branch Library, Meeting Room

## Present

Robert Ray IV, Oscar Fitzgerald, Councilmember Canek Aguirre, Anh Phan, Albert Moseley II, Libby Bawcombe, Director Dawson, Deputy Director Labra, Division Chief Gates

## Excused

Dianne Fox

The meeting was called to order at 4:01pm.

## Public Comment

- Marianne Hawn presented a report and 2025 Annual Report from the Friends of Burke Branch Library which has been retained in the permanent record.
- Kay Brown presented a report from the Friends of Beatley Central Library which has been retained in the permanent record.
- Dan Roth presented a report from the Friends of Duncan Branch Library which has been retained in the permanent record.
- Sarah Hill presented a report from the Friends of Barrett Branch Library which has been retained in the permanent record.
- A sign-in sheet for public attendees was made available and is retained in the permanent record.

## General Services Burke Branch Update

Steven McKenzie with the City's Department of General Services provided an update on the Burke Branch renovation, stating that a construction contract was awarded in December, that demolition would begin on Monday, and that completion was scheduled for April 15. Mr. McKenzie presented samples of the materials that were selected by the Library for the interior. Councilmember Aguirre asked if the Library had staffing for the waiting room section of the new downstairs design and Director Dawson responded that a request was included in the 2014 budget but that a new request for more staff would be submitted in the FY 2028 budget.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Bawcombe to approve the December 15, 2025 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Moseley and passed unanimously with Councilmember Aguirre abstaining.

## Chair's Report

Mr. Ray reported that the City had constricted budgets and that the City Attorney's office had withdrawn its support in providing the Library legal assistance. He stated that the Library does not have funding for legal services in its budget. He stated that the Board had employed attorney Justin Keating for some legal matters and he would be willing to accept outside donations to pay for his services due to the lack of City funding.

### Director's Report

Director Dawson delivered her report, including a review of the Monthly Activity Report. Director Dawson stated that she had attended the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) retreat and that the City and the Library were preparing to celebrate the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Juneteenth in the coming year.

Director Dawson reported that community engagement and data collection was underway in support of the update to the Library's 5-Year Plan. She clarified that recent changes to passport processing at some libraries would not impact Alexandria and that passport services to the community would continue as usual.

Director Dawson reported that filling existing staff vacancies was still paused at the direction of the City Manager. She reported that the City Manager would provide updated guidance on filling of vacancies after presentation of his FY 2027 proposed budget next week.

Director Dawson reported that proposals were being sought by the Department of General Services for replacement of the trellis in the Beatley Library Reading Garden. In addition to a \$50,000 donation made by the Friends of the Beatley Library, the project would be funded by savings realized in the Beatley Library fire alarm replacement project.

### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Moseley delivered the Treasurer's report on behalf of Ms. Fox.

### Investment Committee Report

Ms. Phan delivered the investment report.

### New Business – 2026 Staff Day

Mr. Moseley made a motion to close all Libraries on May 15, 2026 so that employees could participate in the annual Staff Day training event. That motion was seconded by Ms. Bawcombe and approved unanimously.

### New Business – Library Governance

Councilmember Aguirre proposed a motion that the Board discuss what would need to occur for the Library system to become part of the Alexandria City Government. Mr. Fitzgerald objected to the motion before it could be seconded using the "Objection to the Consideration of a Question," stating that it was not worth discussing. Discussion ensued as to whether Mr. Fitzgerald was able to object in the absence of a motion. Councilmember Aguirre made a motion to conduct an exploratory study to see what it would look like for the Library to become a City department. Mr. Ray requested clarification on the motion and asked who would work on the study. Councilmember Aguirre responded that staff from the City and the Library would work together on the study. Mr. Ray proposed a substitute motion to have the study conducted by an independent legal counsel when resources allow, asking Councilmember Aguirre if he would accept that substitution. Councilmember Aguirre declined.

Mr. Fitzgerald once again objected to the motion, stating that it was a waste of time, that it had been studied before, and that the Board had operated in the current manner for over 100 years. Mr. Moseley advised that a two-thirds vote would be required to sustain the objection. A vote was called on the objection. The objection was supported by Mr. Moseley and Mr. Fitzgerald and was opposed by Councilmember Aguirre and Ms. Phan. Mr. Ray abstained and the objection failed.

Ms. Phan seconded the motion made by Councilmember Aguirre to proceed with the study. Mr. Fitzgerald proposed a substitute motion to have the study conducted by an independent third party. That substitute motion failed. Mr. Ray called for a vote on the original motion. That motion passed with Ms. Bawcombe, Ms. Phan, Councilmember Aguirre, and Mr. Moseley in favor and with Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Ray opposed.

Director Dawson stated that she would prepare a draft plan for discussion with her liaison to the City Manager's office to determine if they agree to work on the study. Councilmember Aguirre advised that, as a procedural matter, the City Council would need to approve the plan for a study since it would take more than eight hours of time. Director Dawson was asked to provide periodic updates to the Board on the matter at her discretion.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Moseley made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ms. Bawcombe and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.