Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date
June 15, 2026

Location
Charles E. Beatley Central Library, Board Room

Present
Robert Ray IV, Oscar Fitzgerald (virtual), Dianne Fox, Councilmember Canek Aguirre, Anh Phan, Albert Moseley II, Peter Smeallie, Director Dawson, Deputy Director Labra, Division Chief Gates.

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

Public Comment and Attendees

- Kay Brown, President, Friends of Beatley Central Library, stated that there were 669 volunteer hours in April and May with an estimated value of $22,000. She also introduced new Vice President, Daria Darnell.
- Jean McKean presented a report on behalf of Marianne Hawn for the Burke Friends (attached).
- Dan Roth presented a report from the Friends of Duncan Branch Library, noting a successful book sale that included approximately 700 boxes of books, drew about 3,000 people, and generated record revenue. Mr. Roth also reported that approximately 200 books per day were being donated and that a Summer Reading book sale featuring children's books and beach reads would be held Saturday from 10:00am to 2:00pm.
- Friends of the Barrett Library provided a written report (attached).
- Dar Davis, Beatley Friends; Alethea Predeoux, Deputy City Manager; Lindsey McClenathan, ALF Development Director; and Branch Managers Kayla Selsky, Allison Carmola, and Abby Hargreaves were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Mr. Smeallie to approve the April 20 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Moseley and passed unanimously.

Chair's Report
Mr. Ray provided compliments about Staff Day and reported that he visited the Burke Branch to view the newly completed first floor renovation. He stated that the project was successful and that it would add approximately 5,000 square feet of usable space for the community.

Director's Report
Director Dawson delivered her report, including a review of monthly activity. She reported that COVID test kits continued to be distributed, with 86 kits distributed in April and 79 distributed in May. Director Dawson reported that the Library was reviewing and benchmarking the Chromebook lending program, noting that devices were often not returned and that staff were considering whether to continue the program, adjust charges if permitted, or limit use to on-site access.

Director Dawson reported that Staff Day had 85 participants and that 48 of 51 respondents rated the event as very good or excellent. Participants particularly valued the sessions and the opportunity to connect with staff from other branches.

Director Dawson reported that the Library was winding down All Alexandria Reads and transitioning to the SummerQuest program, with support from Duncan Foundation, the Friends of the Library, and the Alexandria Library Foundation. Director Dawson stated that she, Deputy City Manager Predeoux and some of her City Department Head colleagues participated in a group bonding exercise where they held pop-up story times at all four Library branches.

Director Dawson noted that June was Pride Month and that Juneteenth would be observed this week, with the Library closed on Friday. She reported that a Juneteenth video had been released that morning and thanked Nathan Carrick for his fine work on the video.

Director Dawson reported that the Burke Branch renovation had been completed. She noted that a fundraising strategy for furniture and supplies was being developed by Library Administration and the Alexandria Library Foundation and that an FY 2028 budget request for staffing would be submitted to the City this Fall.

Director Dawson reported that recruitment for the Beatley Central Library Manager position was ongoing. She also stated that she would attend the Library of Virginia Public Library Development subcommittee meeting in Richmond the following Monday, and that she and Deputy Director Labra would attend the American Library Association conference at the end of June.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Fox delivered the Treasurer's report. Mr. Smeallie asked clarifying questions about various account categories.

Investment Committee Report

Ms. Phan delivered the investment report.

Old Business – Budget Update

Director Dawson provided a budget update. Mr. Moseley asked about restrictions related to Chromebooks and whether the Library was still required to follow prior E-rate rules. Director Dawson stated that staff were researching the matter and benchmarking other libraries, including whether on-site use only should be considered.

Old Business – Five-Year Plan

Deputy Director Labra presented the final version of the Five-Year Plan. Mr. Smeallie offered a suggestion for the next five-year planning process, but no changes were made to the draft. A motion was made by Councilmember Aguirre to approve the Five-Year Plan, was seconded by Ms. Phan and passed unanimously. Councilmember Aguirre and Mr. Ray thanked staff for their work on the plan.

Old Business – Library Governance

Director Dawson provided an update on the governance study. She stated that a March 17 memorandum had been sent regarding the Board's request for an exploratory study and that Library and City staff had held several meetings regarding how to proceed. She reported that the study would include comparative research with neighboring jurisdictions and similarly sized libraries, as well as interviews with staff, Board members, partners, Friends groups, the Library of Virginia, and former City and Library staff. Director Dawson reported that Katherine Key from the Office of Performance Analytics would lead the study and that the goal was to complete it by the end of the calendar year. Discussion followed regarding whether the City conducting the analysis could create an actual or perceived conflict of interest and whether an independent third party should conduct the study.

Mr. Smeallie moved that the Board's original request to Council to conduct a comparative study be reconsidered so that the party conducting the study would have no apparent or actual conflict of interest and could not be a potential beneficiary of any study results. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. After discussion, Mr. Smeallie withdrew the motion and provided a revised motion that the City provide to the Board a list of questions, a list of potential interviewees, and a statement of tasks and objectives of the study prior to commencement of any study interviews. Councilmember Aguirre seconded the revised motion, and it passed unanimously.

New Business – Board Calendar

Mr. Moseley made a motion to approve the Board calendar, was seconded by Councilmember Aguirre and amended to change the December meeting date to December 14. The motion to approve the calendar as amended passed unanimously.

New Business – Officers

Mr. Ray read the slate of proposed new officers: Mr. Moseley as Chair, Mr. Ray as Vice Chair, Ms. Fox as Treasurer, and Ms. Phan as Secretary. Councilmember Aguirre made a motion to approve the slate which was seconded by Mr. Smeallie and passed unanimously.

New Business – Carryover Funds

The Board approved certain special funds to be carried over into the next fiscal year. Councilmember Aguirre made a motion to approve the carryover which was seconded by Mr. Moseley and passed unanimously.

New Business – Director Evaluation

The Board delegated the Director annual evaluation process to the incoming Chair, Mr. Moseley. Director Dawson noted that she typically mirrors the City's process by providing the Board Chair and committee with a self-evaluation. Councilmember Aguirre volunteered to serve on the committee. The committee would meet with Human Resources, review the process, and prepare draft results for submission to the City by the end of the following week.

New Business – Annual Report

Mr. Fitzgerald agreed to prepare the annual report.

Adjournment

Mr. Moseley made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councilmember Aguirre and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32pm.