

# Alexandria Library Board Minutes

## Date

April 15, 2024

## Location

Burke Branch Library, Meeting Room

## Present

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm.

## 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.

Kay Brown, President of the Friends of Beatley Library, thanked Councilmember Aguirre for doing the Library Week proclamation and presented their 2023 Annual Report which was added into the official meeting record.

Geri Coleman Tucker, Alexandria resident, commended the Library for its celebration of the Sit-In anniversary and for the All Alexandria Reads program. Ms. Tucker asked if the Library could do more to blunt the effort to ban books. She stated that there is a long history of banned books in the nation and that Virginia is the 5<sup>th</sup> most challenged state with respect to book banning challenges.

Jean McCain, President of the Burke Branch Friends, stated that their priority was to grow membership and recruit board members. She reported that the group had developed a Facebook page and a website. Ms. McCain also stated that their upcoming book sale would occur May 2 – 5 and that volunteers were still needed.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Ray to approve the February 22, 2024, meeting minutes, was seconded by Ms. Fox and was passed unanimously.

## Chair's Report

Chair Hahn provided the Board with an update on the FY2025 budget approval process, noting that the add/delete work session would occur on April 29 and that the final adoption of the budget was scheduled for May 1. She thanked Ms. Bawcombe for her testimony at the February 27 budget public hearing. Chair Hahn announced that Staff Day is May 17 and encouraged Board members to attend. She also said Spring2ACTION was underway with a deadline of April 24 to make donations supporting the Alexandria Library Foundation.

## Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the patron count was up 12.5% over the previous year. Circulation decreased slightly by -1.1%, although there was a notable increase in registered borrowers (10.24%) and in e-borrowers (12.98%). Wi-fi use increased 8% over the previous year and desktop computers were in use 30% of the time. There were 376 passports processed (\$13,160) and 3 exams proctored (\$120). There were 51 hotspot checkouts, 36 Chromebook checkouts and 111 Chromebook renewals.

Director Dawson thanked the Board, Friends of the Library and staff for their advocacy on behalf of the Library for the during the FY2025 budget process. She stated that the City Manager’s proposed budget included funding for the Library’s IT updates and continuation of the hotspot and Chromebook lending programs. Director Dawson formally thanked Councilmember Aguirre for submitting the proposal to fund a full-time (1.0 FTE) outreach position using the Library’s increase in State Aid and to fund a part-time (0.5 FTE) outreach position using \$24,484 in City general funds. She reported that Mayor Wilson and Councilmembers Bagley, Chapman, Gaskins and McPike supported his proposal.

In honor of National Library Week and National Library Workers Day, Director Dawson recognized four staff members who were mentioned on the ALA National Library Workers Day web page as “Library Stars”: Lawrence from the Barrett Branch, Megan from the Barrett Branch, Kayla from the Duncan Branch and Michelle from the Beatley Central Library.

Director Dawson reported that the Library would host a Descendants Panel program on Sunday, May 5 at 1:30pm at the Burke Branch Library as part of the year-long celebration of the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Library Sit-In. She highlighted that All Alexandria Reads programs are underway and that the office of Congressman Don Beyer would host a town hall meeting at the Barrett Branch at the end of the month.

Director Dawson provided updates on the following Library facilities/equipment:

- Beatley Central: replacement of the windows in the building continues to be the focus of the branch and will impact meeting room usage in the upcoming months;
- Barrett Branch: staff met with General Services to get a quote for the cost of a designated meeting room in honor of the Sit-In;
- Burke Branch: General Services reached out to schedule a meeting with Library Administration to discuss next steps on the Burke 1<sup>st</sup> floor project;
- Duncan Branch: Eagle Scout Henry Miller finished installing the garden boxes on the Library property and the branch manager is working with a master gardener to create a children’s sensory garden;
- Local History/Special Collections Branch: received the new camera and peripherals which will be used to digitize portions of the collection and shed light on the under-told story of the 1939 Alexandria Library Sit-In. The equipment was paid for by a grant received by New America from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

#### Treasurer’s Report

Mr. Moseley reported that as of February 29, 2024, the Library was 57% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 61% of its operating budget. The Library received 74% of budgeted State Aid funds and expensed 74% of the original annual budgeted amount. The Library collected \$134,432 or 64% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$26,593 or 66% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

#### Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of March 31, 2024, the market value of the Library’s investment account was \$3,895,833. The quarter to date portfolio performance was 5.10% as compared to the benchmark of 4.56%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was 15.44%, as compared to the benchmark of 14.27%.

#### New Business – Officer Elections

Chair Hahn reported that Ms. Fox had agreed to be the nominating committee for the election of new officers.

#### Old Business – Compensation & Collective Bargaining

Chair Hahn recognized Mr. Ray who proposed that the Board form a committee to further investigate and research the issue of collective bargaining for Alexandria Library staff. Mr. Ray stated that he would like to chair a task force which would report back to the Board in the fall. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if staff compensation was now even with that

of surrounding jurisdictions and Director Dawson stated that it was. Ms. Fox asked about the scope and parameters of the proposed task force. Mr. Ray said he wanted someone to give a short presentation on what the Board can do regarding collective bargaining. Councilmember Aguirre stated that he had no issue with establishing a task force to complete a fact-finding mission. Ms. Fox and Mr. Moseley agreed to serve with Mr. Ray on the proposed task force.

#### Adjournment

Ms. Fox made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 pm. That motion was seconded by Mr. Moseley and approved unanimously.