

# Alexandria Library Board Minutes

## Date

April 17, 2023

## Location

James M. Duncan, Jr. Branch meeting room

## Present

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:02pm.

## Public Comment

Realista Rodriguez, Director of Advocacy for Friends of the Beatley Central Library, reported that the group hosted a successful Spring Book Sale, raising \$33,395.54. She also reported that the group volunteered 826.75 hours during the month of March and would hold an Appreciation Get-Together for those volunteers on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Libby Bawcombe, Vice President/Membership for the Friends of Duncan Library reported that the group is holding a book sale April 26 – 29. Ms. Bawcombe reported that their Board membership is growing, that they have 160 active members, and that they continue to reach out to other Friends groups in support of the Library. It was also requested “that the Board discuss what an ongoing collaboration with the Friends of Duncan Library might look like.”

Ank Webbers, Library patron, posed two questions to the Board. Ms. Webbers asked if the Library had considered how patrons could submit and share reviews of books and asked when she would hear back from the Library about the volunteer application that she had submitted. Director Dawson responded that she would check with her staff and would benchmark how other library systems handle patron book reviews.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Rogers to approve the February 23, 2023 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald and was passed unanimously.

## Chair’s Report

Chair Hahn reported that Library Giving Day resulted in approximately \$3,500 raised by the Alexandria Library Foundation. She thanked the Friends groups for their support via the current book sales and expressed her appreciation for all of the volunteers involved. Chair Hahn also thanked the community members and Friends groups who expressed their support for the Library during the budget hearings and process, particularly with respect to the compensation and security guard issues. Chair Hahn encouraged Board members to attend the Black Family Reunion event on April 29 and Library Staff Day on May 19 and shared the City Council proclamation in honor of Library Week.

## Director’s Report

Director Dawson reported the following monthly statistics as of February 28, 2023:

- The Library distributed 2,503 COVID-19 test kits
- Patron count increased by 49% over the prior year as more people returned to the Library

- Circulation increased over the prior year (5.6%); circulation of e-materials declined (-3.5%)
- Registered borrowers increased over the same period (11.8%); e-borrowers decreased (-3.4%)
- Wi-Fi usage was up from last year (33%) and desktop usage was up as well over the prior year (31%)
- 383 passports processed; 12 exams proctored
- 52 hotspots checked out; 27 Chromebooks checked out and 41 renewed

Director Dawson reported that all staff members would be treated to a pizza party in celebration of National Library Week. Director Dawson highlighted the upcoming Black Family Reunion event on April 29, explaining that its purpose was for the community to gather and to bring documents and photos related to the Alexandria African American community to help fill gaps in the Library's local history collection. Director Dawson also highlighted other programs such as the Metropolitan Youth Ballet event in the Beatley Reading Garden, the Senior Services Genealogy program in Special Collections, and the Ukrainian Voices virtual program on the Library's YouTube channel.

Director Dawson reported that staff will receive training on the use of Narcan for fentanyl overdose. The Library is not currently a distribution site, but that policy will be revisited after July 1 when Narcan becomes available as an over-the-counter drug. She stated that the Library agreed to be a distribution site for gun locks during the month of June in honor of National Safety Awareness month.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Fitzgerald reported that as of February 28, 2023, the Library was 67% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 61% of its operating budget. The Library received 86% of budgeted State Aid funds and expensed 90% of the annual budgeted amount. The Library collected \$114,580 or 55% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$23,631 or 59% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

#### Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of March 31, 2023, the market value of the Library's investment account was \$3,462,249.95. Calendar year to date portfolio performance was 5.06% as compared to the benchmark of 5.32%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was -6.25%, as compared to the benchmark of -4.83%.

#### Old Business – FY24 Budget

Director Dawson thanked the Board and Friends groups for their advocacy efforts in support of the Library during the budget process. She reported that the City Council appeared to support the City Manager's inclusion of funding for a compensation study for the Library and Sheriff's departments. Director Dawson stated that the proposed budget included some funds to begin addressing pay issues once those studies are complete.

Director Dawson reported that Council Member Aguirre sponsored a budget amendment to restore funding for contract security guards which had not been included in the City Manager's proposed budget. She stated that all seven members of City Council had lent their support to the restoration proposal. Director Dawson reported that the City Council would conduct an "add/delete" session on April 25 and approve the final budget on May 3.

#### New Business – Nomination Committee for Officers

Ms. Rogers and Mr. Mobley agreed to serve on the nomination committee for selection of new officers.

Council Member Aguirre asked that the Board address the request of the Friends of the Duncan Library to further collaborate. Director Dawson stated that the Library could research and benchmark over the next few

months how other Library systems partner with their Friends groups. Council Member Aguirre suggested that may take the form of event promotion, fundraising, advocacy, information sharing and general collaboration with one another.

Ms. Webbers asked for an explanation of why she was not able to make a full presentation to Ms. Walker at the Local History/Special Collections branch and Director Dawson explained that staff are often unable to dedicate a large amount of time to such presentations, but that she would follow up with Ms. Walker to discuss it.

#### Adjournment

Ms. Rogers made a motion to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Mr. Ray and approved unanimously.