

# Alexandria Library Board Minutes

## Date

February 23, 2023

## Location

Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch, meeting room

## Present

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

## Excused

Councilmember Canek Aguirre

The meeting was called to order at 4:04pm.

## Public Comment

Carolyn Griglione, retired school teacher and citizen of Alexandria spoke about her family's long-time use of the Burke Branch Library and inquired about the status and planned use of the first floor of that building. Director Dawson responded that funds are currently included in the City of Alexandria capital budget to renovate that space and that community input will be sought as part of that process.

Realista Rodriguez, Director of Advocacy for Friends of the Beatley Central Library, reported that the group will hold its Spring Book Sale from March 22 - 27. She also reported that the group volunteered 266.25 hours during the month of January 2023 for a value of \$6,656.25.

Libby Bawcombe, Vice President/Membership for the Friends of Duncan Library reported that they are working to make connections with the other Friends groups in order to support the Library during the budget process. She also reported that the group would hold its Spring Book Sale from April 26 – April 29.

## Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Ray to approve the December 19, 2022 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald and was passed unanimously. A motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the January 26, 2023 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Ray and was passed unanimously.

## Chair's Report

Chair Hahn highlighted the February 22 Washington Post article by John Kelly regarding Brenda Mitchell-Powell's new book on the Alexandria Library Sit-In. She reported that the City Manager will present his recommended budget on February 28, to be followed by public hearings, work sessions and ultimate approval by the City Council in May. Chair Hahn introduced the Board's newest member, Dianne Fox, reading her bio and asking the other members to introduce themselves as well.

## Director's Report

Director Dawson reported the following monthly statistics as of January 31, 2023:

- The Library distributed 4,146 COVID-19 test kits
- Patron count increased by 49% over the prior year as more people returned to the Library
- Registered borrowers increased over the same period (12.3%) as did circulation (6.7%)

- Circulation of e-materials continues to decline (-4.8%) as did the number of e-borrowers (-4.7%)
- Wi-Fi usage is up (33%) and desktop usage was up as well over the prior year (27%)
- 167 passports processed, valued at \$5,845; 9 exams proctored, valued at \$360
- 54 hotspots checked out and 17 renewed; 20 Chromebooks checked out and 46 renewed

Director Dawson reported that she had a very good one on one meeting with City Manager Jim Parajon on February 14. She provided him with an infographic on the Library and discussed pertinent aspects of the Library's history, organizational structure, and reviewed the Five-Year Plan priorities. During that meeting, City Manager Parajon informed Director Dawson that he would be meeting with the Vice Mayor to discuss possible use of the Law Library space to accommodate staff related to the new program for Police Body Worn Cameras. Director Dawson explained to him the history of the Law Library and the need for pro se litigants to have access to the space. Mr. Moseley explained that he had used the space himself to meet with children for whom he was a guardian ad litem.

Director Dawson thanked Division Chief Gates for initiating the security upgrades at each branch. The Burke Branch upgrade is almost complete and the remaining branches will be implemented next. Each will receive new security panels and panic buttons. Burke received additional cameras and Beatley will receive an upgraded video system to better see who is being buzzed in to the building.

Director Dawson thanked staff for the George Washington displays and for their Black History Month programs, noting that the City Manager had highlighted the prominence of Library programming in the City Calendar. She also highlighted the upcoming virtual author program with Anita Hackley Lambert who will discuss her new biography of her great-grandfather, F.H.M. Murray. Mr. Murray was a prominent local civil rights advocate as well as the grandfather of Alexandria Library 1939 Sit-In participant, Morris Murray.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mr. Fitzgerald reported that as of January 31, 2023, the Library was 58% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 54% of its operating budget. The Library received 86% of budgeted State Aid funds and expensed 83% of the annual budgeted amount. The Library collected \$94,029 or 45% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$21,215 or 53% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

#### Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of January 31, 2023, the market value of the Library's investment account was \$3,488,718.83. Calendar year to date portfolio performance was 5.65% as compared to the benchmark of 5.05%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was -8.17%, as compared to the benchmark of -6.50%.

#### Old Business – FY24 Budget

Director Dawson reported that City Manager Parajon would release his proposed budget on February 28 and that, at that time, she would be able to share the status of the Library budget with the Board. Director Dawson shared the City's budget calendar with the Board, highlighting the dates where the Board and Friends groups would have an opportunity to submit comments or to give testimony in support of the Library.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Mr. Ray and approved unanimously at 5:10pm.