

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

October 16, 2023

Location

Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, Board Room

Present

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

Public Comment

Libby Bawcombe, Vice President/Membership for the Friends of Duncan Library, stated that their biggest concern remains staff compensation and retention. Ms. Bawcombe reported that the group recently sent a petition to City Manager Jim Parajon, with 182 signatures collected at the Duncan Friends Book Sale requesting fair pay for Alexandria Library staff. Ms. Bawcombe stated that the Friends of Beatley Central Library and Friends of Burke Branch Library also have petitions at their book sales. The full Friends of Duncan report is included in the formal meeting record. Written reports were also received from the Friend of Beatley and Friends of Buke and are also included in the formal meeting record.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the September 18, 2023 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Moseley and was passed unanimously.

Chair's Report

Chair Hahn stated how pleased she was with the Alexandria Library Foundation author event on September 21, 2023. She expressed thanks to the Friends groups for helping to staff the welcome and registration tables at the event. She noted that the Alexandria Library Foundation had registered to participate in the Scottish Walk Parade again in December and encouraged participation again this year.

Chair Hahn stated that she was happy to hear about the Friends groups getting together to coordinate their efforts and support each other. Chair Hahn said she is interested to see how the City will react to the fair employee compensation petition from the Friends groups. She expressed excitement for the outreach vehicle project and is eager to hear about the next steps. Chair Hahn noted that she is frustrated by the lack of a dedicated parking lot for the Barrett Library, but acknowledged that there may not be much that can be done about the situation. Director Dawson explained that the surrounding property is not owned by the Library or the City. Last year, Councilmember Aguirre tried to get staff parking decals, but was not successful. She noted that similar parking issues exist for City employees at other facilities throughout Alexandria and agreed that parking for Library staff is a problem at Barrett.

Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the Library distributed 2,900 COVID test kits in September which was a notable increase over the 2,000 or so distributed in August. She stated that the data incident had impacted staff's ability to provide other monthly statistics at this time, but that they would be provided at the next meeting.

Director Dawson thanked staff for their Hispanic Heritage Month efforts and reported that the Library had received a lot of great feedback from the community and positive press and social media. She stated that the Tour d'Alexandria would take place at 10:00 am on Saturday, October 21. She noted that registration had to be closed early due to the large number of participants and that additional volunteers were still needed.

Director Dawson described feedback she received from a Library patron asking for the toys in the children's area of Beatley to be removed because they make too much noise. Director Dawson said research shows that toys are a useful part of a child's educational experience at the Library, but that many people still have a traditional view of libraries as quiet only areas.

Director Dawson noted that the PAWS to Read program will take place on October 23 and it is a popular program that many of the branches participate in. The Law Library will host a webinar in January, 2024, titled "Know Your Rights" about employment rights for pregnant women, parents and caregivers.

Director Dawson said the IT Department had their kick-off meeting today for implementation of Microsoft 365. She explained the benefits of the new system both for the Library and for the City, including the safety of the Library's data and the ability to share documents and calendars. Director Dawson said work on the leaks at Beatley had begun and that the window glass work was progressing.

Director Dawson said she will present at VLA on Monday. Her presentation will be titled "Celebrating Your Library's History." The Alexandria Library Company lecture will happen on October 27 and the topic for her presentation was not yet decided.

Director Dawson said the Library's outreach vehicle had arrived at Beatley. There is a committee deciding how to outfit and use the vehicle. The vehicle is not intended to act as a bookmobile, but may still have some books onboard.

Director Dawson stated that the City Manager had indicated he would share more information on the Library compensation study at the end of November or December. With the resignation of the City's HR director, Director Dawson is waiting until later in the year to request an update.

Councilmember Aguirre requested social media statistics for the Library's Hispanic Heritage Month programs.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Moseley reported that as of August 31, 2023, the Library was 17% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 15% of its operating budget. The Library received 21% of budgeted State Aid funds and expensed 49% of the annual budgeted amount. The Library collected \$29,334 or 14% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$7,098 or 18% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of September 30, 2023, the market value of the Library's investment account was \$3,421,847.07. The quarter to date portfolio performance was -3.44% as compared to the benchmark of -3.31%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was 11.68%, as compared to the benchmark of 12.68%.

Old Business – FY25 Budget

Director Dawson reported that the Library had received FY25 budget guidance from the Office of Management and Budget and that submissions were due on November 8. All departments must use the Race and Social Equity tool to score submissions. Director Dawson explained that supplemental budget requests must support

prior commitments, advance priorities set by Council and be submitted in priority order. All departments are being asked to submit a 1% reduction, which is \$85,892 for the Library. Director Dawson said that the City has also asked for an update on funding for supplemental requests approved in the FY24 budget.

New Business – FY23 Audit

Director Dawson reported that the Library had received a digital copy of the completed audit. It was completed by Kositzka, Wicks and Company (KWC) and the Library received a clean bill of health with no findings. Mr. Ray asked if the successful audit is attributable to Laura Gates. Director Dawson said that, yes, it was largely attributable to Division Chief Gates' work and leadership, as well as to the work of Fiscal Analyst, Johanna Seltzer. Director Dawson reported that this was the second year in a row that Ms. Gates and her team had a clean audit. Mr. Ray recommended sending a formal commendation to Division Chief Gates from the Board for her good work and the Board unanimously supported that action.

Executive Session

Councilmember Aguirre moved that the Board convene in Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter and a cybersecurity threat or vulnerability. Mr. Moseley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

After the Board returned from the closed Executive Session, Councilmember Aguirre read a motion to reconvene the meeting in open session and to adopt the Executive Session resolution. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded that motion and it was passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Mr. Ray made a motion to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Mr. Moseley and approved unanimously at 5:34 pm.