

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

September 18, 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, Division Chief Gates.

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

Public Comment

Brack Stovall, Alexandria resident and former Duncan Branch Manager spoke regarding his support for the Library and concerns regarding staff retention and compensation.

Libby Bawcombe, Vice President/Membership for the Friends of Duncan Library thanked the Board for including them in last week's meeting with the City Manager. She reiterated their biggest concern is staff compensation and retention. Ms. Bawcombe reported that the group recently purchased \$5,100 in adult graphic novels and YA manga for the Duncan Branch and that they continue to contribute funds for materials, programs, special events and equipment. She reported that their next book sale is September 27 – 30 and that they support the concept of a "Super Friends" group. The group recently partnered with the Del Ray Business Association (DRBA) on a community event where they successfully raised \$12,000. They are currently working on a collaboration with Lost Boy Cider. Their next meeting is Monday, October 16th at the Duncan Branch.

Jean McCain, President of the Burke Branch Friends spoke regarding their support of the Library and stated that their biggest concern was staff compensation and the need for a Burke Branch manager. She reported that their officers are new and still learning their roles and that they recently held a retreat. They are focused on increasing their membership and are planning a new website. She stated that their next book sale begins October 12th and ends October 15th. Their next meeting is November 9th at the Burke Branch and they are happy to work with the other Friends group to form a "Friends super group."

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Rogers to approve the June 22, 2023 meeting minutes, was seconded by Mr. Moseley and was passed unanimously with one abstention from Councilmember Aguirre.

Chair's Report

Chair Hahn summarized the meeting held last week at Beatley Library with the Friends groups and the City Manager. She stated that the group coalesced around two major concerns – staff compensation and facility maintenance. Chair Hahn read through much of the letter that she planned to send to the City Manager as a follow up to the meeting.

Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the Library distributed 2,003 COVID test kits in August and had noticed an uptick in community need. She also reported that the Library had distributed approximately 250 gunlocks since the inception of that program in June. She stated that the data incident had impacted staff's ability to provide other monthly statistics at this time.

Director Dawson congratulated staff for another successful SummerQuest program and provided an infographic handout regarding the program statistics. She reported that Parking Day (September 15th) was a success as well at the Barrett Branch. She reminded the group of the many programs and displays that the Library will have for Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 – October 15). Director Dawson highlighted that a young Library patron built an impressive Lego model of the Beatley Branch as part of the Library's Lego contest. Lastly, she reported on the Library's programs and displays for Banned Book Week (October 1 – 7), including a planned Read Out at Elaine's Restaurant in Old Town.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked who funds the gunlock program; Deputy Director Labra responded that it is not funded by the Library. Mr. Fitzgerald also asked if there was an update on the status of the Law Library. Director Dawson stated that it was briefly discussed at the meeting with the City Manager and that he stated no decision had been made. Director Dawson reported that she had reminded the City Manager of the need to continue to serve pro se litigants in at least some portion of that space.

Mr. Ray asked if City Human Resources had reached out about position descriptions. Director Dawson responded that she will be sending an email to the HR Director offering to collaborate on the position analysis.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Moseley reported that as of June 30, 2023, the Library was 100% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 95.3% of its operating budget. The Library received 100% of budgeted State Aid funds and expended 100% of the annual budgeted amount. The Library collected \$199,348 or 95% of its requirement of \$210,000 in fees revenue. The Law Library received \$ 36,878 or 92% of the budgeted \$40,000 in filing fees.

Investment Committee Report

Mr. Moseley reported that as of August 31, 2023, the market value of the Library's investment account was \$3,566,507.43. Three-month portfolio performance was 4.01% as compared to the benchmark of 3.54%. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was 7.67%, as compared to the benchmark of 7.87%.

Old Business-FY23 Annual Report

Mr. Fitzgerald provided an overview of the Library Board Annual Report that he drafted. Chair Hahn commended Mr. Fitzgerald on his excellent submission. A motion was made by Ms. Fox to accept the FY23 Annual Report, was seconded by Mr. Ray and was passed unanimously. The report will now be forwarded to the City.

New Business-FY25 Budget

Director Dawson reviewed the content of the annual letter sent by the City Manager to Boards and Commissions. She stated that she will crosswalk City Manager and City Council priorities with those of the Library's partners, ACPS and DCHS. Director Dawson planned to make a chart of these items and priorities for the Board to review at its October meeting. She also stated that outreach is a huge item for the Library. With the acquisition of the new outreach vehicle, the Library wants to establish a dedicated outreach team (also requested in last year's budget).

Mr. Moseley asked about the Library's 5-Year Plan and Director Dawson stated that it would be part of the aforementioned crosswalk.

Adjournment

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