

Alexandria Library Board Minutes

Date

September 20, 2021

Location

Hybrid meeting with Library Board and select staff attending in person in the Dickman Board Room at the Beatley Central Library and the public attending virtually via Zoom.

Present

Kathleen Schloeder, Trudi Hahn, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Karen Marshall, Robert Ray IV, Patsy Rogers, Oscar Fitzgerald, Director Dawson, Deputy Director Knight, Division Chief Gates, HR Manager Ross Farley.

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

Public Comment

Mr. Chuck Ziegler, Director – Advocacy, Friends of the Beatley Central Library, submitted and read a short statement:

*"-Annual Memberships as of August 31, 2021- 64; Lifetime Memberships as of August 31, 2021- 14;
Total memberships as of August 31, 2021- 78*

Membership has been in decline due to the pandemic-induced cessation of our Spring and Fall Book Sales, when many dealers became members so that they could avail themselves of "members only" early admission. With the eventual resumption of the book sales, membership should significantly increase.

-Beatley Friends held a Fall Festival Flash Book Sale on September 18. Additional Flash Sales are scheduled for October 23 and November 18.

-On-line book sales in August, handled by two dealers, totaled \$505.22.

-As of August 31, 2021 total assets were \$163,700.74.

-Net income, minus book sale expenses of \$488.35 totaled \$745.89.

-Elections will soon be held for the posts of President and Secretary of the Friends of the Beatley Central Library."

Mr. Ziegler also stated that the Beatley Friends organization is looking for candidates to fill several positions.

Ms. Bobbie Fisher of 1300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202 submitted the following statement:

"ALEXANDRIA - LOGO - What's on my Mind??? Library RACISM"

Ms. Fisher spoke for approximately four minutes stating that she is a retired Africa American woman who has lodged complaints of racism which have not been taken seriously by Alexandria Library leadership. Ms. Fisher stated that she had witnessed incidents of racism which were not addressed by the Director or the Deputy Director. Ms. Fisher also stated that her vehicle was damaged during a rain storm in July while it was parked on the street adjacent to the Barrett branch and that no Library staff members would assist her.

The Chair closed the public comment period as no other speakers were present.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Ray to approve the following meeting minutes: September 21, 2020; October 19, 2020; January 29, 2021; February 18, 2021; April 19, 2021; and June 21, 2021. Ms. Marshall seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Chair's Report

None

Director's Report

Director Dawson thanked staff for their continued efforts during the pandemic and congratulated Deputy Director, Kimberly Knight, for her election to the office of Vice President of the Virginia Library Association.

Director Dawson provided a summary of the current pandemic conditions and reported that both the Burke and Barrett branches would be opening soon for Sunday service. Director Dawson then reviewed the Monthly Activity Report and stated that traditional borrowers are returning to the Library which has impacted those statistics.

Director Dawson reported that planning and preparation for the FY2023 Library budget is underway. Director Dawson also reported on the two grants received by the Library from the City as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). She reported that one grant allows for the Library to purchase and lend 50 mobile hotspots to customers and that the second grant allows for the Library to engage performers and purchase supplies and equipment to conduct outdoor programming. Director Dawson stated that the Library also received a grant through the Emergency Connectivity Fund which allows the Library to purchase and lend Chromebooks to customers. The Library received a fourth grant from the Library of Virginia to conduct an equity audit. The audit will focus on collections as well as equity in staffing, programming and facilities.

Ms. Marshall asked if Library staff had taken unconscious bias training. Director Dawson stated that as a department head she has taken micro aggression training and that there is a Library Racial Equity Core Team which focuses on diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Director Dawson reported that the Burke branch public art project would be unveiled on September 25th and that the Library's bike tour would occur on October 2nd. She also stated that Library staff must report their vaccination status by September 26th. Director Dawson thanked the Alexandria Library Company for providing funds for the summer intern at the Local History/Special Collections branch.

Director Dawson reported that the Beatley parking lot renovation should be complete by the end of the year. Director Dawson stated that there was no update on collective bargaining other than the fact that the City is hiring a staff member to manage the process and that she would be part of that interview committee.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of August 31, 2021, the Library was 16.67% of the way through the fiscal year and had expended 15.06% of the budget. Approximately 60.02% of State Aid funds were expended in that period. As of August 31, 2021, the Library had collected \$23,068.34 or 18.31% of its fines and fees budget requirement of \$126,000. The Law Library received \$4,345.60 in filing fees as of August 31, 2021.

Investment Committee Report

Mr. Ray reported that as of August 31, 2021, the market value of the Library's investment account was \$4,026,564.47. Portfolio performance over the last twelve months was 18.41% as compared to the benchmark of 17.48%. Portfolio performance for the calendar year to date was 10.37%, as compared to the benchmark of 9.27%.

Old Business – Director’s Evaluation

Chair Schloeder reported that she and Ms. Hahn had worked over the summer to complete the process for the Director’s evaluation. Director Dawson also completed a self-evaluation. The results of the Board’s evaluation were submitted to the City and discussed in executive session at the end of this meeting.

Old Business – Annual Report Draft

Mr. Fitzgerald provided the Board with a draft of the annual report. Chair Schloeder stated that the spring 2020 reopening date should be added to the report and that a typo should be corrected on page 4 of the report. Ms. Hahn moved approval of the report with the two noted corrections and Ms. Rogers seconded that motion. The report with two corrections was approved unanimously.

Old Business – Annual Election of Officers

Chair Schloeder thanked the Board and Library administration for their support and stated that she was honored to have served as Chair. Ms. Rogers nominated Ms. Hahn to serve as Chair, Mr. Ray to serve as Vice Chair, Ms. Marshall to serve as Treasurer, and Mr. Fitzgerald as Secretary. Mr. Fitzgerald declined the office. Chair Schloeder nominated Ms. Rogers to serve as Secretary instead and Ms. Rogers accepted the nomination. Chair Schloeder made a motion to approve the new slate of nominated officers, Ms. Bennett-Parker seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously. Ms. Hahn and Ms. Schloeder agreed that for the duration of the meeting, Ms. Schloeder would continue to act as Chair.

New Business – Approval of Electronic Participation Policy

Director Dawson presented an Electronic Participation Policy and recommended that the Board adopt that policy so that it could continue the ability to meet virtually, especially in the event that pandemic or other emergency conditions arise which hinder the Board from meeting in person. Ms. Bennett-Parker made a motion to approve the recommended policy, Ms. Marshall seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously.

New Business – Samuel Tucker Naming Opportunity

Director Dawson briefed the Board on a customer suggestion that the Library honor Samuel Tucker with a naming opportunity. Chair Schloeder suggested that the topic be addressed at a future Library Foundation Board meeting.

Executive Session

Ms. Marshall moved that the Board go into Executive session to discuss personnel matters. Ms. Bennett-Parker seconded that motion which was passed unanimously.

After the Board returned from Executive Session, Ms. Marshall moved to reconvene the meeting, Mr. Ray seconded that motion and it was passed unanimously.

Ms. Marshall subsequently made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Mr. Ray and approved unanimously.