

Library Board Minutes

October 16, 2019

Location: Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, Dickman Board Room

Present: Kathleen Schloeder, Oscar Fitzgerald, Helen Desfosses, Trudi Hahn, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Patricia Rogers, Robert Ray IV, Director Dawson, Division Chief/Administrative Services Wesson

Guests: Chuck Ziegler, Friends of Beatley Central Library; Clarion University library science student Shonda; Eileen Bradley, former president of the Friends of Beatley Library

The meeting was called to order at 4:03pm.

Public Comments

Chuck Ziegler, of the Friends of Beatley Central Library, reported that the Friends of Beatley Library had raised \$30,494 at their Fall Book Sale, a new record. Their net funds available to support Beatley Library was \$138,714 as of September 30.

Eileen Bradley complimented the Burke Branch staff, including former Branch Manager Kyle Maier and new Branch Manager Genelle Schuler. She also noted that Children's Manager Suzanne was "first rate, gracious, and helpful" and that she had observed Jim assist a customer for over two hours, stating that this excellent customer service was "what we look for in our libraries." Ms. Bradley, as a member on the board of the Alexandria Film Festival, provided the Library Board with a summary of the upcoming film festival. She noted that Beatley Library would be hosting free films on November 8, providing an opportunity for those who might not be able to afford the cost for the other two days to see "solid films." After providing some highlights of the films offered, she invited the board to attend.

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the September 2019 minutes of the Library Board meeting was made by Ms. Desfosses and was seconded by Ms. Rogers. The motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the FY21 current services operating budget was due today. This portion of the budget demonstrates what the cost would be if we continue doing business as usual. The Library also submitted a request to utilize some of the City's carryover funds for three items: \$75,000 for the concept design for the Burke first floor; \$25,000 for security equipment purchases recommended by the Library's safety committee - for hiding in place and emergency panic buttons; and \$20,000 to upgrade the pop-up vehicle to electric. The first two requests were approved in full and OMB gave us \$10,000 for the vehicle upgrade. It is assumed the vehicle request was reduced since the original amount approved was a 50% match.

The For Love of Country award ceremony was held October 20 with about 90 people in attendance; there had been 75 submissions. This year's topic was "Who has influenced your life, and why." The

Director noted that she was happy to see the diversity of the children in the room. The participants expressed excitement about the opportunity to participate in the upcoming essay contest in the winter.

The Director reported that Beatley's Fall Festival had about 700 attendees. The annual Le Tour d'Alexandria Bike Tour was also a success, with 38 riders over the 2-hour period. Riders from VeloCity Bicycle Cooperative assisted riders with flat tires and escorted them to join the rest of the group. A sheriff's deputy was present this year for security at some troublesome intersections this year. The route was related to the 1939 Sit-In and 225th anniversaries, providing riders with some history about the sit-in participants and Library history. The Library received several compliments about the ride.

Director Dawson thanked Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker and Mr. Ray, who along with Mayor Wilson were readers at the Banned Book event at the Atheneum. Next year, the Library will be taking over the week-long program and will hold it at the libraries instead of the Atheneum.

The Director noted that this evening would be the Sit-In program featuring a panel discussion with descendants of the 1939 sit-in. This is the final anniversary program of the year. She explained that she had been approached by the Commonwealth Attorney who had noticed that the case against the sit-in participants had languished, and asked if the case was ever dismissed. Ms. Dawson explained that the Out of Obscurity DVD had said the case was not dismissed. Library staff researched further, and City Clerk Ed Semonian was contacted, and all research confirmed that no related documents existed. Records & Archives pointed Library staff to the Police, who could not even find the arrest records. The Director contacted family members, and in talking to one of tonight's panelists, Morris Murray's nephew said that his uncle's only regret was that "those bogus charges were never dismissed." So, Judge Lisa Kimler signed the petition to dismiss all charges.

Director Dawson had still not received any word from Human Resources regarding the salary for the Deputy Director. The position was posted on the Library website, several diversity caucuses, American Library Association, and others. But it had not yet been placed on Neogov, the City's recruitment site, because they had not approved the position being listed as a Senior Executive Group position. The position is funded, but the Library was challenging OMB and HR to increase the salary range because we had been underpaying Renee DiPilato. The Director and Human Resources Manager Ross Farley had tried to fix the issue while Ms. DiPilato was here and when she left, tried to fix it before posting it. The Director stated that she wanted to conduct interviews before Thanksgiving, and start the new employee in January. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that if the Library can't advertise it at the higher rate, it can't attract a higher level of employee. He added that the Board was very concerned that this was taking so long for a critical position and was impacting our ability to recruit well-qualified applicants. He motioned that the Library Board support the Director's position to hire at a higher salary level. Ms. Desfosses seconded the motion. Ms. Bennett-Parker abstained. The motion carried.

Director Dawson announced that she had been appointed as the City's representative to the ACT for Alexandria board. ACT is a non-profit which runs the city's Spring2Action, looks at early childhood issues, family concerns, training pertaining to social justice (including Allyship) and runs the Impact Forum annually. Ms. Dawson is replacing Debra Collins as the City's representative.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Desfosses stated that the Library was 25% through the year, had spent 23.9% of the budget and 63.3% of State Aid funds. The Library had made almost 30% of its fines and fees requirement.

Investment Report

Mr. Ray presented the Investment Report. He reported that as of June 28, 2019, the fiscal year to date portfolio performance was 6.55%, slightly higher than the benchmark of 5.79%. The year to date market value of the Library's investment account increased \$58,379 to \$3,121,859.

New Business

Director Dawson reported that the annual audit and the opinion of the auditor, Kositzka Wicks, had been received. She noted that most non-profits have their auditors prepare the financial statements. However, it is considered a finding, but it is of no concern. In fact 100% of our auditor's non-profit customers had them prepare their statements.

Director Dawson presented a draft of guidelines for petitioning on library property. Accompanying maps had not been created yet but will look like the no smoking maps. Registrar of Voters Anna Leider and Legislative Director Sarah Taylor both received a copy of this and were asked for comments as well as the city attorney. It is still being reviewed by the attorney and will be brought to the board for final approval.

Director Dawson reported that three finalists and some alternates had been selected for the public art project at the Burke Branch. On Wednesday October 30 Genelle Schuler and Director Dawson would provide tours of Burke for the artists. She noted that Parks and Recreation Deputy Director Diane Ruggiero asked for two Library Board members to attend the meeting. Ms. Hahn said that she would attend. After the artists visit, the panel will meet again in November to select the artist. The selection will be ratified by the arts commission and there will then be a period of public engagement after which the artist will prepare the proposal. The selection committee will then approve the proposal or request changes. After the committee's approval, it must also be approved by the Commission of the Arts.

Director Dawson reported that publisher MacMillan announced that they will only allow libraries to purchase one copy of an author's new ebook per system, and would then have to wait 3 months to purchase additional copies. This creates a huge problem for libraries because hold lists will be incredibly long. There is also a concern that other publishers will follow suit. The Urban Libraries Council (ULC), of which Alexandria is a member, created an ebook working group, along with the Canadian ULC. Macmillan announced in their talking points that they had met with the Big 5 library systems (King County, New York, Las Angeles, San Francisco, and Cleveland) and that those libraries were OK with the decision – this was false. Macmillan believes that libraries owning titles hurts sales of books. They were challenged to share their data, but data was not shared. Libraries are deciding to boycott Macmillan. Director Dawson stated that Alexandria is fortunate that we don't purchase as many multiple copies as other larger systems do. Fairfax was considering doing a boycott. Macmillan's new policy begins November 1. Technical Services Manager Lynda Rudd is reviewing the list of affected authors to determine to what degree the change would affect us. Ms. Desfosses noted that some people don't

even realize that libraries pay for ebooks. Director Dawson replied that Amazon charges \$9.99 to individuals, but libraries have to pay \$40 for the same title or \$60 if it's a best seller. Ms. Desfosses stated that the Library needs to provide these in a format that people want them in. The Director said that Macmillan group does a robust business in ebooks; they are one of the top providers. Libraries are concerned that an embargo hurts the user. Ms. Hahn asked if there is a way for a library to receive donations of ebooks. Director Dawson replied that there is not. Overdrive and RBI Digital are the platforms that we use primarily, and they can't allow us to accept donations. The Director stated that ALA and ULC have provided sample letters that libraries can use should they decide to boycott Macmillan. However, she would gather additional information for the board to decide what action they may like the library to take. Mr. Ray motioned that the Library Board supported the Director's position and the position of ULC, that Macmillan's action is a restriction of the university of the streets, and as a library board, we do not approve of Macmillan's plan of restricting libraries' capacity to distribute as many copies of an ebook as we want. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. The Director stated that as a public library, we sympathize with others who are affected by it. Ms. Hahn said that Macmillan's actions are wrong-minded. She said Macmillan's authors supported it because they somehow feel that by restricting one form, ebooks, then more people will purchase more ebooks. They think that it's libraries vs. bookstores, as if they were competitors but studies have shown that in communities with lots of bookstores, libraries are stronger. They are reinforcing each other, rather than diminishing each other. Mr. Fitzgerald said that if you limit a system to one book, then it's four books that wouldn't be sold. He added that as an expression of our concern at this point, it's appropriate. The motion passed unanimously.

Director Dawson stated that the company REI had begun its leak testing of Beatley as the envelope project was underway.

A motion to adjourn at 5:30pm was made by Ms. Bennett-Parker and seconded by Ms. Desfosses. The motion carried.