

## Library Board Minutes

September 21, 2020

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Present: Kathleen Schloeder, Trudi Hahn, Helen Desfosses, Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Robert Ray, Patricia Rogers, Director Dawson, Deputy Director Kimberly Knight, Division Chief/Administrative Services Wesson, Human Resources Manager Ross Farley, Digital Services Librarian Cara Sonnier

Excused: Oscar Fitzgerald

Guests: Chuck Ziegler, Friends of Beatley Central Library

The meeting was called to order at 4:05pm.

### Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the Library opened its doors on July 17 with limited capacity. Thanked everyone involved for their participation and support, and she noted that the Library had received numerous notes and thank you's for the services provided during the pandemic.

Director Dawson provided a snapshot of statistics. She reported that in August, more than 7,600 people had visited Beatley, more than 2,700 at Duncan, more than 2,100 at Burke, and more than 1,300 at Barrett. Staff had managed to circulate items through curbside as well as in-person, and in August more than 19,200 items circulated at Beatley, more than 16,000 at Duncan, more than 8,600 at Barrett, and more than 3,700 at Burke. It was obvious to staff that one of the needed services was access to computers, and in August, Beatley hosted more than 664 separate internet sessions, which was 50% of the available time. Burke's computers were in use more than 25% of their available time, with 239 sessions. Barrett's computers were in use more than 40% of their available time, with 173 sessions. Duncan's computers were in use more than 26% of the time they were available, with 149 sessions. Not all computers were made available to the public in order to maintain physical distancing.

The director reported that Library staff had managed a wonderful transition of programming from in-person to virtual. Of note, a number of Constitution programs were upcoming, with three programs that look at the Constitution from an equity standpoint. The Director noted that September is Library Card Sign-Up Month, and the Library had encouraged the public to come in and get a library card or to swap their old card for a new card. The sit-in commemorative cards were brought back this month, due to the demand received when they were released previously. The Director reported that the Library would be naming the Duncan Branch meeting room in honor of Beth Patridge, based on a donation to the Alexandria Library Foundation for \$100,000 from her family member, Bob Scott. The Library will annually spend \$4,500 to \$5,000 from this endowment on the types of books and ebooks which Beth Patridge enjoyed. The Library will place commemorative books plates in items purchased using those funds. Bob Scott will host a celebration recognizing Beth with a small gathering of her friends and family at the Duncan Branch on October 7. Mr. Scott will also purchase a tree which will be planted on the Duncan Library grounds in Beth Patridge's name.

Director Dawson reported that the Beatley Library typically functions as an absentee voting site, and this year absentee voting will take place October 23 through October 31. Due to the need for COVID-19 physical distancing, furniture had been moved and is being stored in the Beatley Library meeting room. In order to accommodate voting, the furniture will be moved and stored offsite by the Elections Office.

Director Dawson reported that the Burke Library is working with Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services Inc. (ANHSI) on a monthly basis to offer COVID testing.

The director noted that as the library buildings have been open, staff continue to learn from experience and have made a few changes and upgrades. For example, while there is plexiglass at all of the service desks, additional areas have been identified which require plexiglass. Library staff have received additional PPE from the City. Certified Nursing Aides (CNAs), provided by the City with CARES funds, and security guards are performing temperature checks of incoming customers using contactless temperature machines.

Director Dawson noted that the REopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums (REALM) research partnership between OCLC, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Battelle did a series of studies on how long the COVID-19 virus survives on library materials. As a result of their additional testing, the Library has increased the quarantine period on returned materials from four days to seven days. Books remain on customer records during this time but a grace period ensures that any fine associated with the item will be waived.

### New Business

Director Dawson noted that the Office of Management and Budget shared the message “Hope for the best, prepare for the worst.” Departments had received a schedule of upcoming budget dates but had not yet received guidance from OMB regarding any adjustments to the FY22 budget.

The Director thanked the Library Board and Library Friends for their advocacy regarding a request from the Virginia Library Association’s legislative committee to contact Senator Saslaw pertaining to State Aid. Alexandria is slated to receive an additional \$118,000 over a four-year period if funding is approved, which would bring our State Aid budget to over \$300,000. The Director had not received any news from the State pertaining to this yet.

Ms. Desfosses moved to accept the annual report. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. The motion carried. Ms. Schloeder thanked Mr. Fitzgerald for his work on the report and Ms. Wesson for assisting him. She noted that the accepted report would be transmitted to the City.

Ms. Rogers presented the slate of board officers. Ms. Bennett-Parker moved to accept the slate of officers: Kathleen Schloeder as Chair, Oscar Fitzgerald as Vice chair, Helen Desfosses as Treasurer, and Trudi Hahn as Secretary. Ms. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### Public Comments

Chuck Ziegler, Vice Chair for Advocacy of the Friends of the Beatley Library commented that while the Beatley Friends were currently unable to access the library building, they continued to work some volunteer hours, with 27 hours valued at \$675. The Friends’ online book sales for August totaled \$1,089.

The Beatley Friends total current assets as of August 31 was \$158,808. Year to date income was \$15,484 and total expenses were \$22,724. They had 110 members plus 10 life members, which were fewer than usual. He attributed the decline in memberships to the loss of memberships of book dealers who tend to join in order to attend the book sales during the members only time. Mr. Ziegler concluded by saying that the Friends continue to think it's important that there be coordination between the Library Board, the Library Friends, and Library Administration in determining the messaging to the City, and that the Friends want to be as cooperative as possible. Ms. Schloeder thanked Mr. Ziegler, and added that she hoped that the Library would be able to welcome the Friends into the libraries soon.

#### Executive Session

At 4:35pm, Ms. Desfosses moved to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Ms. Bennett-Parker seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ms. Rogers moved to reconvene in open session at 4:51pm. Ms. Hahn seconded the motion. The motion carried.

A motion to adjourn at 4:52pm was made by Mr. Rogers and seconded by Ms. Hahn. The motion carried.