

The Alexandria Library Board was called to order by Chairperson Dorothy “Brooksie” Koopman, on Monday, June 20, 2011 at 4:10 pm in the Ilka K. Dickman Board Room at Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library. Members present were R. Hobson, D. Koopman, O. Fitzgerald, A. Paul, G. Day-Fuller, F. Fannon, and T. Downing.

Staff present were Director Dawson, Deputy Director Renner and Division Chief of Administrative Services Wesson.

Mrs. Paul moved to approve the April 2011 minutes as distributed. Mr. Hobson seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

The Year-To-Date statistics are as follows:

DIVISION	CIRCULATION	CIRCULATION PERCENTAGE INC/DEC	PATRON COUNT	PATRON COUNT PERCENTAGE INC/DEC
BARRETT	117,000	-27.23%	114,319	-14.25%
BEATLEY	475,407	-7.18%	311,922	-6.37%
BURKE	104,898	-18.96%	152,690	0.30%
DUNCAN	228,195	-10.95%	203,892	-11.37%
LOCAL HISTORY	13,475	-6.27%	14,240	-5.51%
TALKING BOOKS	6,740	54.55%	2,023	-13.06%
OVERDRIVE DOWNLOADABLE & EBOOK USAGE	6,566	18.43%		
NETLIBRARY EBOOK USAGE	7,206	186.86%		
TOTAL	959,487	-11.61%	799,086	-7.74%
REGISTERED BORROWERS		175,956		2.73%
E BORROWERS*		7,076		28.77%
LIBRARY MATERIALS		454,087		1.32%
LIBRARY WEBSITE VISITS		246,156		-1.06%

LIBRARY WEBSITE PAGES USED	308,613	-4.92%
MEETING ROOMS	147 meetings (MONTHLY) \$2,640.00 (YEAR TO DATE)	

MONTHLY INTERNET COMPUTER UTILIZATION:

	No. of Terminals-Automated Signup	No. of Sessions	Utilization
Barrett	8	1,439	65.58%
Beatley	24	5,580	73.63%
Burke	16	2,520	62.04%
Duncan	9	1,552	65.75%
TOTAL	57	11,091	68.59%

*E Borrowers (formerly Downloadable Borrowers) count did not previously include the cumulative total from previous fiscal year.

Director Dawson presented the monthly activity report.

Director Dawson announced that she would be attending the annual American Library Association Conference in New Orleans later in the month.

Director Dawson shared a draft of a budget memo addressed to Councilman Krupicka, which she had just received from Rose Boyd regarding the Library Board's views on expansion of the board. The memo would be added to an upcoming City Council Docket, to close out that docket item. Mr. Hobson moved to approve the transmission of what was now a draft memo to Councilman Krupicka. Mrs. Paul seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Director Dawson summarized the issue which had recently arisen regarding the need to submit a request for a waiver to the State Library, based on the 14.5% budget cuts which the Library received in FY10, in order to retain full State Aid funding in FY12. She added that the State Library Development Committee had decided not to approve Alexandria's waiver request but she would be sending additional information to demonstrate the in-kind assistance that the Library had received from the City. Councilman Fannon offered to send a letter of support from the viewpoint of a councilman who serves on the library board. Mr. Hobson said that he would speak with Clifton "Chip" Woodrum III and possibly Jon Bowerbank, committee members of the library development committee.

Mrs. Paul reported that the Library was 90% through the year and had spent 85% of the budget and 65% of State Aid funds. The Library had made \$233,395 or about 50% of the fines and fees requirement. Director Dawson added that the Library had held back on its non-personnel expenditures throughout the year and would have about \$34,000 left over that would be spent on wish list items. She added that the Library had also held back on personnel expenditures by keeping positions vacant to ensure there would be enough money to cover the fines and fees shortage. The Library would have over \$300,000 in personnel expenditures remaining at year-end, which the City would retain, probably in order to apply to any shortages of other departments' budget overage. Since she could not negotiate to get some of it back, she remarked that the Library would make sure that we are not in this position again; that we would not hold back as much during FY12. She added that there is no incentive to be fiscally responsible. Councilman Fannon said that he would like to provide some type of incentive to departments to encourage fiscal responsibility. Mr. Hobson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mrs. Koopman seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Hobson reported that the Investment Committee had not met since April. He added that performance results remained essentially the same.

Mrs. Koopman announced that she and Mrs. Paul were working on completing the director's evaluation.

Mr. Hobson reported that the nominating committee, which consisted of Mr. Downing, himself, and Mr. Fitzgerald would like to renominate the existing officers: Mrs. Koopman as chair, Mr. Fitzgerald as vice chair, Mrs. Day-Fuller as Secretary, and Mrs. Paul as Treasurer. Mrs. Paul moved to adopt the slate as presented. Mr. Hobson seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Director Dawson reported that the Request for Quote (RFQ) for the Burke Branch green roof had not yet been released. She added that General Services said that they could still begin the project in August. She had reminded General Services that in February we requested that the project begin in August, after Summerquest, in order to have the least effect on Library operations. This schedule would only disrupt service for students for part of September. Director Dawson reiterated with General Services that they must reopen the facility before October.

Director Dawson reported that Library staff had been tracking the parking issues at the Burke Branch because there was a concern that BRAC employees would park in Burke's parking lot when their building opens. Rich Baier, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services said that he would track it as well. In tracking the number of people who park in our lot, staff had once again been observing people parking in our lot and walking across the street to the INOVA building. She had requested that the Burke Branch be included as a parking district. The Library would also be involved because staff would be able to assist residents in going online to obtain guest passes for their neighborhood.

Director Dawson said that the Library was fortunate to have a community that donates books to us. What the Library doesn't use in its collection is given to the Friends to put in their book sales. There was a question by one Friends group as to whether the Library could or should sell donated books. The City Attorney determined that the Library is an organization that can accept donations of books and sell them for money on its behalf. Director Dawson also said that she had run across an organization which had book scanners that would help determine the value of the donated books, and she had asked the branch managers about them. One of the managers replied that this was what Thom Downing did for the Library. Director Dawson told the manager that she was concerned because it was questionable whether Mr. Downing, as a member of the Board, should continue this activity.

Mr. Downing provided some history, stating that when he had worked with the Duncan Friends (Friends of the Duncan Library) book sales, he had noticed that dealers came to the book sales on the first night and purchased the most valuable items which they then resell. So, he had proposed to help the Duncan Friends with selling their donations online. He had worked with them for 3 years, the Burke Branch Friends for 1 ½ years, and the Friends of Beatley Central Library for nearly one year. He provided a summary of the process and noted that his service differs from other similar companies in that he charges a per book shipping charge but he said that this is more than offset by the fact that no volunteers or staff are involved in packaging and shipping. Mr. Fannon asked how many books go online to be sold and what his gross revenues were. Mr. Downing replied that the Duncan Friends average \$2800 a year in online sales and the annual physical book sales gross is around \$13,000. He added that he helped to manage book sales too, and worked with a local storage unit company, which had given unlimited storage for Duncan.

Mrs. Paul asked if this was his primary job. Mr. Downing replied that it was not and that it had been a hobby, off and on since 1994 and that the reason he began with the Duncan Friends was that it was a way to get more money to the Friends to fund programs. Mr. Fannon asked if Director Dawson was concerned about Mr. Downing being on the Board while performing this activity or the procedures used. Director Dawson replied that she was concerned about his being on the Board while performing this activity. She added that her happening on this information had taken her off guard. She had asked herself if people would look at it in a certain way and had wondered whether he could serve in both capacities.

Mr. Downing noted that in his application for Library Board membership submitted to the City Council, he mentioned his involvement with online sales; he had made some reference to it but didn't get into details. He noted that his agreement had always been with the Friends. He repeated that his arrangement is superior to that provided by other vendors because it requires no staff or volunteer involvement. He added that if the Library started taking donations and selling them directly, the Friends would get less money. Director Dawson replied that the Library would still benefit. Mr. Downing said that the Friends would not have control of the money. Mr. Hobson stated that the Friends

are a private, personal voluntary group that is trying to promote the use of library services, particularly at the branch which they support. He said that he did not draw a great distinction between the Friends and the Library because they were both trying to do the same things and that he did not think it was an answer to the conflict issue that this is the Friends and not the Library.

Mrs. Day-Fuller asked if the major conflict was that Mr. Downing was doing this at all, or that he was profiting from this? Mr. Hobson stated that it was the latter, and the fact that Mr. Downing was profiting without full disclosure. Mr. Fannon asked Director Dawson if she had spoken to the City Attorney. He then said that he wondered that if it had been disclosed whether it would have made a difference in his appointment to the Board, but that was a question for the City Council. Mr. Downing said that he understood perception, but he was trying to understand how his position on the board would influence anything. Mrs. Koopman replied that as somebody who was working on the Library's behalf, he was profiting from contributions to the Library and he had an exclusive contract that he signed with the Duncan Friends and he had approached the other Friends groups to make similar arrangements, and he had access to all of those donations – this had created an exclusive situation. Mr. Downing said that he felt that the way she was painting this was that this was a money making venture that did not profit the Library. Mrs. Koopman said that there can be no appearance of a conflict, however small, as an appointee of City Council; having a contract that no one in Library Administration was aware of until the last two weeks and the Library Board until this morning. She said that it would be different if he were donating all of the proceeds and not making any money. It was different when he was a private citizen. She further explained that since these were Library materials; the Library owns them; the resulting profit should have come back to the Library, but part of the profit had gone to Mr. Downing and continued to go to him. She noted that he had been on the Board since February 2011.

Mr. Downing said that every one of the librarians that he had worked with knew about this arrangement. Mrs. Koopman responded that she realized that, but the Board and the Administration did not know about this and that they should have known about it. Mr. Downing said that if the Board decided not to use him, then the Library would give up that revenue. Mrs. Koopman replied that she did not want a member of this Board profiting in any way from the Library system. Mr. Downing said that he felt that was shortsighted; that if this was something in which he was rolling in money and was not making money for the Library he could somewhat understand. He said that over the last three years he had made approximately \$10,000 for the Library and that all of the agreements were known to the managers; he had not tried to hide anything. Mr. Fannon said that he could talk to the City Attorney and get his opinion on this, and would let the Board know, and the discussion could be resumed from there. He said that the options he saw were for Mr. Downing to resign from the Board, or to stay on the Board and not do the online sales. He told Mr. Downing that he could make his decision as to what was more important to him. Director Dawson said that she had spoken to some of the staff; they had thought that once he became a board member that he had spoken with her and the Board. She added that was not saying that the staff did not have some responsibility

here, but she thought it's only fair that he should acknowledge and accept some responsibility for this discussion.

Mr. Hobson said that until the Board received the opinion from the City Attorney that he thought that there should be immediate suspension of sales through Mr. Downing until the Board arrived at a resolution. Mr. Downing replied that he could terminate the Burke Branch Friends contract right away, and that the Beatley Friend's contract was due to expire at the end of the month. He said that he could speak to the Duncan Friends about putting their agreement on hold. Mrs. Koopman agreed that all sales should be suspended. She added that the Friends did not own the books that Mr. Downing was selling. Mr. Downing asked what was the difference between the Friends selling the books at the book sales and selling through him. Mrs. Koopman replied that he was a board member and he was profiting from this. Mrs. Paul, referring to the Robert's Rules of Order, said that she did not know of any volunteer organization in which board members accepted remuneration.

Mr. Fannon asked how many books Mr. Downing had listed currently. Mr. Downing replied that he had about 500. He added that in addition to selling items for the Library, he also sold some of his own. Mrs. Koopman asked where he got those books. Mr. Downing said that he got them from yard sales and the like. Mrs. Koopman said that if the City Attorney agreed, that she would want the online listings of Library materials to be removed. Mr. Downing said that he could provide specifics but that he charged a 30 cent per item processing fee, which did not include shipping, packing, or online fees. Mrs. Koopman asked if the shipping came out of his profits. Mr. Downing replied that it did. Mrs. Koopman confirmed that this then reduces his share of the profit; Mr. Downing confirmed that it did. Mrs. Koopman asked whether Friends profits from book sales should go into the Friends treasury or if it should go back to the Library directly. Director Dawson replied that the way the Friends were doing it was traditional, because any monies they spent was spent on behalf of the libraries. Mr. Downing noted that if a textbook was donated that would normally go into the book sale for \$3, and he identified it as one that would sell for \$40, the Library gets more income than it would have if it went into the Friends' book sale. He added that if there was a decision that he shouldn't be involved in the online book sale for the Library, that since he was somewhat of an expert he would be glad to help select a vendor. He noted that he had been doing this for 15 years and had a sense of value. Mr. Hobson made a motion to suspend all online book sales through Burke, Duncan, and Beatley until the Board heard from the City Attorney. Mr. Fannon seconded the motion. The motion passed with Mr. Downing abstaining.

Mrs. Koopman announced that she would work with library staff on the 75th anniversary planning for the Alexandria Library Foundation.

Mrs. Paul moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hobson seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gwendolyn Day-Fuller
Secretary