

September 11, 2017

From: Alexandria Library Board

To: Alexandria City Council

Subject: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2017

## **LIBRARY BOARD MISSION**

In accordance with an agreement with the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Library Board sets the policies, rules and regulations of the Library; submits a budget to the City for the operation and maintenance of the Library; and appoints and approves such personnel as are necessary to operate the Library. The Board also sits as the Boards of the James M. Duncan, Jr. Foundation and the Alexandria Library Foundation that monitors the investment portfolios and approves grants from these funds.

## **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

The Library Board consists of 7 members: 3 appointed by City Council, 3 appointed by the Alexandria Library Company, and 1 City Council Representative. Kathleen Schloeder was reappointed (2/14/17) by City Council and Trudi Hahn was appointed (2/14/17) to fill the vacancy created when Gwen Day-Fuller decided not to apply for another term. Helen Desfosses (appointed 12/13/16) is the third City Council appointee. Oscar Fitzgerald was reelected by the Library Company (4/17/17) to a three year term. Frank Fannon (elected 4/15/16) and William Brierre (elected 5/6/15) are the other two Library Company representatives. Willie F. Bailey, Sr. (appointed 1/2/16) continues to serve as the City Council representative.

## **MEETINGS**

The Board met six times during fiscal 2017: on September 9, October 17 and December 19 of 2016, and February 23, April 17 and June 19 of 2017. All members exceeded the 75% attendance or excused absence requirement set by the City.

## **OVERSIGHT**

During these meetings Director Rose Dawson kept the Board abreast of major developments in operations, services, usage, facility conditions, personnel matters and all other significant developments in the Library system.

The Board continues to be impressed with Director Dawson's leadership. Her involvement with leadership positions in both state and national library organizations continues to draw much favorable attention to the Alexandria Library system.

## **BUDGET**

As has been the case for the past five years, the major challenge facing the Board was the tight City of Alexandria budget. In the FY 17 budget the library actually received a 3.15% increase. However, the city's five year forecast projected deficits for the next few years. The Office of Management and Budget asked city departments to participate in an exercise in which they identified 10% reductions over a three year period. Responding to Board concerns, the exercise did not include reductions to the materials budget. Savings could be achieved by a reorganization and a reduction in public services rather than a reduction of hours.

At the December meeting Director Dawson reported that the city was requiring the Library to take a 5% cuts in its operating budget. She proposed eliminating the security guards at the Burke and Barrett branches. If cuts were required in subsequent years she hoped that the custodial services could be centralized which would result in additional savings to the Library.

At the February meeting Director Dawson reported that the City Manager did not accept the security guard cut but did accept the elimination of a long-vacant position, defunding of some other vacant positions, and increasing the passport revenue.

The final FY 18 budget included an overall decrease for the Library of \$42,000 with the loss of one full time and one part time employee. The budget did, however, include funding for new self-checkout machines and security cameras for all the Library branches. The Board was grateful to the outpouring of citywide support for the Library that helped to forestall further cuts.

## **LIBRARY HOURS**

The Library Board was grateful that the City Council restored Sunday hours in the FY 17 budget. However, the board continued to advocate for a full restoration of hours. The Board noted that the current hours are very frustrating for customers, as it was difficult to determine which branch was open on any given day. The Board asked the Director to study whether additional morning or evening hours would be more beneficial to the patrons. After studying the alternatives she recommended increasing morning hours to support the highly successful on going children's programs. To increase either morning or evening hours she estimated it would take an additional \$107,000. In view of the tight budget the Board decided to defer consideration of additional hours until at least next year in hopes that the budget prospects might improve.

## **BRANCH REORGANIZATION**

The Board applauded the hard work of Director Dawson to improve efficiency and address potential budget shortfalls by implementing a reorganization plan that streamlined workflows in the circulation department. The Library removed the three circulation managers at Barrett, Burke and Duncan and folded the positions into a single position of the Library Operations Supervisor who oversees circulation at those three locations. A Library Assistant II position was created to support the Supervisor position. These changes which were part of the Library's Five Year Plan to reassess staffing needs went into effect on 1 July 2017.

## **FUDICIARY ACTIONS**

Board members attended a fiduciary training session offered by BB&T which manages the funds in the Alexandria Library Foundation and the James M. Duncan, Jr. Foundation. The bank provided the Board with a template for bylaws of foundations. The Board approved several minor changes to the existing bylaws of the Library Foundation to reflect best practices.

Burke & Herbert representatives notified the Library Board that the repurchase account currently in place that is part of the Library budget would no longer be offered and that the Insured Cash Sweep account could replace it. The Insured Cash Sweep account is insured by the FDIC while the current repurchase account exceeded the FDIC limits and was not insured fully. The Board voted to move the Burke & Herbert repurchase account to the new Cash Sweep account so that it will be insured by the FDIC.

### **BURKE BRANCH SPACE UTILIZATION**

After the Alexandria City Public School Board vacated the first floor space in the Burke Branch Library which had once been part of that Library the Library submitted a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget request to fund a design study for the space. City Council included \$50,000 in the FY 2016 Capital Improvement budget for that purpose. The City's Procurement Department completed the request for proposals. However, in the spring of this year the City contracted with a consultant to do a facilities study including HVAC issues and water intrusion. As a result the City postponed further planning for the Burke space. The Board feels that development of this space for use by the Burke Branch should be a City priority.

### **ALEXANDRIA LAW LIBRARY**

The integration of the Law Library into the Alexandria Library system continued. Their catalog was merged into the Library's on line catalog which was now available at all branch locations. The Library's management of the Law Library has received copious praise from the patrons. Although the Law Library has been funded for three years, Director Dawson reiterated and the Board agreed that any reduced or eliminated funding for the Law Library would result in service reductions at the Law Library or elimination of services altogether.

### **THE LIBRARY'S PASSPORT SERVICE**

The Beatley Central Library began processing passports last year for 18 hours a week on five days including Saturdays and Sundays. In October 2016 Barrett Branch began offering Passport services on the two days a week it was not offered at Beatley.

In June 2016 it was reported that 5,514 passports had been processed. The Board was gratified to note that a year later 9596 passports were processed, a 73% increase.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

The Library changed its domain name from Alexandria.lib.va.us to Alexlibraryva.org in order to shorten the address and replace the outdated format. The Library continues to upgrade its information technology resources. The Pharos system was replaced with Comprise which allows users of the public computers to charge copies to their credit

cards. The Library also installed a new customer communications system and chat service which answers basic questions from callers and frees up staff for other duties. The Board noted that the number of e book borrowers in the past fiscal year grew more than 350% from 23,694 to 88,550. Despite the prodigious growth in e book circulation traditional circulation, not including e books, increased by 4.1%. Numerous activities and programs offered by the Library system also resulted in a nearly 5% increase in the patron count. The bottom line: the Library Board is pleased to see that the Library continues to serve a larger and larger segment of the City population.

### **BRANDING AND MARKETING**

The Board extended congratulations to Communications Officer Anton Murray and several members of the Marketing and Branding Committee who received an award at the National Association of Government Communicators annual conference for the new Library logo design and for the marketing initiative for the passport service. These awards recognize the ongoing success of implementing the Five Year Plan goal of developing consistent branding and marketing materials.

### **THOMAS JEFFERSON TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP**

The Board applauded the implementation of the new Thomas Jefferson Traveling Fellowship that was funded by an anonymous donor. The fellowship, unique in the library field, provided an opportunity to learn from colleagues overseas and create a shared experience. During their trip to tour libraries in Europe the two library participants, the Deputy Director and the Central Branch Manager, maintained a social media presence which was shared by the Public Library Association. The participants presented their experiences at the Annual Staff Day.

### **KUDOS**

The Board wishes to recognize the 2017 Outstanding Performance Award (OPA) and Director's Award Winners:

Nominee Name	Award Category	OPA or Director's Award
Monica Varner	An idea or method that significantly improves the administrative or operational efficiency of a work group, division, or department	OPA
Hannah Risley	Efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in job performance	OPA
Marketing & Branding Committee: Anton Murray, Linda Wesson, Renee DiPilato, Bryan Noble, Allison Carmola, Marilyn Doherty, Barbara Manley, Theresa Reiss, Athena Williams, Confidence Akiti, Genelle Schuler	An innovative or creative approach to a project or assignment that results in successful project completion beyond normal expectations	OPA
Deadre Henderson	Service to the public; Actions which strengthen and contribute to the effectiveness of the nominee's immediate work group (2 categories)	OPA
Anu Singla	Service to the public	Director's Award
Carol Pak	Service to the public	Director's Award
Farzana Khan	Teamwork and cooperation in working with fellow employees to attain the goals of the organization	Director's Award
Sandra Holt	Efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity in job performance	Director's Award
Madeleine Wells	Teamwork and cooperation in working with fellow employees to attain the goals of the organization	Director's Award

Finally, the Board would like to thank the Mayor, City Council and the City Manager for their continuing support of the Alexandria Library especially during these difficult budgetary times.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

- Kathleen Schloeder, Chair (City Council Appointee)
- Oscar Fitzgerald, Vice Chair (Library Company Representative)
- Helen Desfosses, Treasurer (City Council Appointee)
- Trudi Hahn, Secretary (City Council Appointee)
- William Brierre (Library Company Representative)
- Frank Fannon (Library Company Representative)
- Willie F. Bailey, Sr. (City Council Representative)