

September 17, 2018

From: Alexandria Library Board

To: Alexandria City Council

Subject: Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018

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 appointed 2/14/17, Trudi Hahn appointed 2/14/17, and Helen Desfosses appointed 12/13/16 are the City Council appointees. Patsy Rogers was appointed by the Alexandria Library Company 5/1/18 to replace William Brierre who decided not to seek reappointment. Oscar Fitzgerald appointed 4/17/17 and Frank Fannon appointed 4/15/16 are the other two Library Company representatives. Willie F. Bailey, Sr. appointed 1/2/16 continued to serve as the City Council representative.

MEETINGS

The Board met seven times during fiscal 2018: on September 11, October 16, November 29 and December 18 of 2017, and February 22, April 16 and June 18 of 2018. All current members exceeded the 75% attendance or excused absence requirement set by the City. The meetings are usually held at the Beatley Library, but this year the board decided to schedule meetings at Barrett, Burke and Duncan Branches as well. The Managers of those branches gave the board informative tours of their facilities before the meetings.

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. The library was one of 25 libraries in the nation to be awarded a

grant to participate in the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Stories Club, a program funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the American Library Association. The Library will be working with the Alexandria Sheriff's office to conduct a reading and discussion program for incarcerated young adults.

BUDGET

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. For the Fiscal 19 budget the city asked the Library to submit a plan to reduce the budget further by 2% or \$137,000. This would have been the eighth year of budget reductions for the library. The Board noted that at least for the past two years no further cuts were made to the materials acquisition budget. When the proposed FY 19 citywide budget was released in February, health insurance and retirement costs to the city were not as high as anticipated which obviated the need for major budget reductions. Although the final library budget of \$7,749,729 represents a 3.1% increase over last year, the increase largely funded increases in staff salaries. The budget did include several cuts in personnel costs as a result of reorganizing staff dealing with passport processing and digital services to meet changing needs.

POP-UP VEHICLE

A budget proposal to fund a pop-up outreach vehicle that meets one of the goals of the Library's Five Year Plan in addition to several of the goals of the city's strategic plan received favorable support. In the FY 19 budget the city budgeted half the cost (\$36,250) for the Pop-Up Library Outreach vehicle. The other half of the cost was contributed by the Alexandria Library Foundation (\$28,750), the Friends of the Beatley Library (\$500), Friends of the Duncan Library (\$4,000), and Friends of Barrett (\$3,000).

MANUSCRIPT CONSERVATION IN THE LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION

The library requested that the Board approve funds from the Mourot fund for conservation of Local History materials. Some of the materials were in such bad condition that they could not even be used by the public for fear of irreparable damage. The Mourot fund was established to purchase decorative arts resources. The board, however, felt that the Mourots would have supported conservation of local history documents as well. The Board approved \$10,000 from the Mourot fund to conserve the C.G. Lee Collection, the Alexander Family ledger, the Whittington Diary and the World War I Red Cross Scrapbook.

ART FOR THE BURKE BRANCH LIBRARY

The city's Office of the Arts has budgeted \$100,000 for outdoor art at the Burke Branch Library because the old parking lot mural had been removed. However, based on community input the art will not be limited to the parking lot but may include the facility or the library grounds. To consider possible art installations, the chairman was

appointed to a committee made up of two library personnel, representatives from the Office of the Arts and Events, and public members with ties to the arts community.

BURKE BRANCH SPACE UTILIZATION

After the Alexandria City Public School staff vacated the first floor space in the Burke Branch Library which had once been part of that building 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 2017 the City contracted with a consultant to do a facilities study to review the condition of all City buildings. As a result the City postponed further planning for the Burke space. The Board continues to feel strongly that development of this space for use by the Burke Branch should be a City priority.

The board requested an update of the status of the first floor space. At the April meeting a representative from General Services accompanied the board on a tour of the space. Asked about the status of the \$50,000 the GSA representative said that the funds had been reallocated.

Chairman Schloeder then met with the City Manager, Mark Jinks to get an update on the project. He said that the facilities plan would be submitted to City Council in the fall. He assured the Chairman that no other city agencies had expressed an interest in the Burke space and that the library should resubmit the \$50,000 for planning purposes in the FY 20 CIP budget and \$400,000 for the renovation of the space in the FY 21 CIP budget.

ALEXANDRIA LAW LIBRARY

The Library's management of the Law Library has received copious praise from the patrons. The patron count increased 26% and the circulation grew 226% over the last year. 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. When the Law Library was about three quarters through the year it had received only about a quarter of its funding which depends on filing fees. The City Manager was notified that the Law Library would not generate enough revenue to cover its budget because of a drop in cases filed and the resulting loss of fees; the city agreed to make up the difference.

LIBRARY USAGE

In addition to patrons visiting the libraries to check out books, numerous activities and programs offered by the Library system resulted in nearly a 6% increase in visitors to 717,068. Patrons checked out over 1.6 million items or about a 20% increase over the past fiscal year. That's in a city with an estimated population of 160,000. The Board also noted that the number of e books downloaded in the past fiscal year continued to grow

to an impressive 311,996 items. The bottom line: the Library Board is pleased to see that the Library continues to serve a larger and larger segment of the City's population.

BRANDING AND MARKETING

The Board congratulated the Marketing Committee under Anton Murray's leadership, with Linda Wesson and Renee DiPilato's assistance. In January the "I Am Alexandria Library" video series came out along with a new *Welcome Brochure* which was available in English, Spanish, Amharic, and Arabic. A new newsletter started in December and a blog was introduced in January featuring content produced by reference librarians. These programs are part of the ongoing implementation of 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 and on their return shared their experiences at the Public Library Association conference in March 2018.

MEETING ROOM POLICY

The Board approved a new Meeting Room policy. It had been 15 years since the policy was reviewed. The policy changed the reservation period from six months to three and the residency requirement was removed. It consolidated the individual branch policies into one. Rental fees were standardized rather than specific for each category of user. Meeting rooms were open to rentals on Sundays.

KUDOS

The Board wishes to recognize the following:

| Award Category | Recipient Name |
|---|-----------------------|
| Director's Multi-Tasker Award | Jean Gregorio |
| Director's Multi-Tasker Award | Sandra Holt |
| Efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in job performance | Kyle Maier |
| Efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in job performance | Lawrence Marshall |
| An innovative and creative approach to a project or assignment that results in successful project completion beyond normal expectations | Kira Omans |
| Teamwork and cooperation in working with fellow employees to attain the goals of the organization. | Diana Price |

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| Teamwork and cooperation in working with fellow employees to attain the goals of the organization. | Chelsea Strobo |
| Teamwork and cooperation in working with fellow employees to attain the goals of the organization. | Team:, Sabrina Buckley, Venetta Bueno, Alison McKeever, Diana Price, Amy Sutton-Cannon |

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)
Willie F. Bailey, Sr. (City Council Representative)
Frank Fannon (Library Company Representative)
Patsy Rogers (Library Company Representative)