

Library Board Minutes

December 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, Director Dawson, Division Chief/Administrative Services Wesson

Excused: Robert Ray IV

Guests: Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, and Jennifer Zettl, Public Art Coordinator from Office of the Arts; Donna Poillucci, Deputy Director, General Services; Chuck Ziegler, Friends of Beatley Central Library.

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

Public Comments

Chuck Ziegler reported that the Friends of Beatley Library had raised a total of \$32,513 at their Fall Book Sale, a new record. Their net funds available to support Beatley Library were \$138,696 and the established budget for expenditures to support the Beatley Library for the next year was \$58,250. He reported that he would be attending upcoming City Council hearings in support of the Library.

Diana Ruggiero, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation, lead with the Office of the Arts made a presentation regarding the upcoming art project to be placed at the Burke Branch Library. She reported that the City had received 140 applications in response to the Request for Qualifications issued in Spring 2019. The Project Task Force reviewed and scored the submissions, and in October 2019 three artists were invited to visit Alexandria, tour the site, and meet with members of the Task Force and Library staff. At a meeting in November 2019, the Task Force made their final selection for recommendation to the Alexandria Commission for the Arts: Project One Studio. Next steps involve approval by the Commission for the Arts, the City will then write a contract, followed by community engagement which will inform the concept design.

Donna Poillucci, Deputy Director, General Services, provided a presentation to explain the Library's Capital Facilities Maintenance Program (CFMP) budget. She noted that in 2015, the City hired an outside firm to assess all of its buildings. The information provided was placed into a database, which attaches an average lifespan to every system, and allows the City to determine when systems should be replaced. Grades are assigned based on condition of the systems, indicating whether a system is in a state of good repair or is in need of repair or replacement. The City must then assess which projects may be worked on during any particular year, based on information from the database as well as information provided by General Services technicians and departmental input. Projects compete with each other, and priorities include safety, then exterior, then interior, and finally aesthetics. Grade C is considered average and acceptable, with a goal that 56% or more systems are Grade C or better. In order to keep all Library buildings at a C grade, GS included \$28 million for CFMP in the ten-year FY21 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget. It remains to be seen whether the full amount will be approved through the budget process. Poillucci noted that GS attempts to combine projects when possible, to

improve efficiency. She gave the example that if the ceiling needs to be worked on, they may change the lights at the same time if that is warranted. She noted that the Burke space planning project is a Capital Improvement Project request, not a CFMP item. Director Dawson said that she had received a question whether libraries would be doing a facilities plan. Poillucci responded that there are plans to do a facilities plan for libraries and recreation facilities in FY22.

Approval of minutes

A motion to approve the October 2019 minutes with amendments was made by Ms. Bennett-Parker and was seconded by Ms. Desfosses. The motion carried.

A motion to approve the November 2019 minutes was made by Ms. Hahn and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. Ms. Bennett-Parker abstained. The motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Dawson reported that the patron count was down and circulation continues to break even, with the number of e-borrowers and website visits up. She reported that the Library's Focus Area Team (FAT), including the Department of Community and Human Services, Parks & Recreation, and the Health Department, had had two meetings to discuss prioritization of budget reductions and supplemental requests. The Office of Management and Budget would next submit its recommendations to the City Manager. Ms. Schloeder added that she had provided a letter which was submitted with the Library's budget, which stated that the board did not agree with the budget cuts. The City Manager will present his budget proposal to City Council in February.

Director Dawson reported that Beatley Central Library would turn twenty in January and on Saturday, February 1, Beatley would host its anniversary celebration and would host programs, displays, and activities throughout January.

Director Dawson reported that the sit-in program in October had received a lot of accolades. She added that the dismissal of the charges against the 1939 sit-in participants, announced by Mayor Wilson at the event, is important during this time when racial equities is being discussed throughout the city and country. She noted that the Robinson Library would be celebrating its 80th anniversary on April 24, 2020.

Director Dawson announced that she had been asked to join the joint facilities colocation meetings, in which the City and ACPS would look at colocation of services for any future building projects. She stated that one of the projects that already had approval is MacArthur Elementary School and a comment was made that it might be nice to co-locate a library with a school. Director Dawson is aware that other cities have explored colocation of services but is not in favor of a library at the school. The Library needs a facilities plan before agreeing to additional locations. She noted that when Brooksie Koopman was chair of this board, the Library pushed for a presence when the City was first developing Potomac Yard. Specifically, Director Dawson had asked for a library presence at the firehouse being built there. With Amazon HQ2 in the area, the increase in families in Potomac Yard will eventually require a library presence for sure. She has also stated that she wants a presence with Metro as well. Mr. Fitzgerald commented that having a library presence sounds good on the surface, but why have two libraries at the same site. Also, there could be a problem with the public coming into the schools and further, the

community might think that this is a school library, and wouldn't cross the threshold. Ms. Hahn added that school librarians are trained differently. Director Dawson stated that she would like to maintain the existing library buildings first before looking to have additional libraries. She added that the Duncan Branch, closest to Potomac Yard, was too small even after it was renovated because of resistance to making the building two stories.

Director Dawson reported that she had received thirteen applicants for the Deputy Director position, that she had selected six to interview, and interviews would be completed next week. If necessary, she would conduct follow-up interviews in January, and hoped to start them in Feb. She had received some interest at ALA over the summer, and did not see them come in, so she wondered if the delay caused by the City had played into it.

Director Dawson reported that the funding for the Request for Proposal for design of the first floor of Burke had been approved. Library staff now need to meet with General Services to move forward.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Desfosses stated that the Library was 41.7% through the year, had spent 36.6% of the budget and 70.3% of State Aid funds. The Library had made 43.2% of its fines and fees requirement.

Investment Report

Ms. Desfosses presented the Investment Report. She reported that as of September 30, 2019, the fiscal year to date portfolio performance was 0.72%, slightly higher than the benchmark of 0.49%. The performance over the last twelve months was 4.18% as compared to the benchmark of 3.72%. The year to date market value of the Library's investment account increased \$8,606 to \$3,130,465.

New Business

The Director presented the Policy on Petitioning, Campaigning and Free Speech Activities. The Board had reviewed this previously, and had now been reviewed by the city attorney. Ms. Hahn moved to adopt the policy. Ms. Bennett-Parker seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Director Dawson made a request to close the Libraries on Saturday, July 4, 2020. As a federal holiday, the City observes the holiday on Friday, July 3. In benchmarking with all surrounding jurisdictions, they would all be closed on Saturday the 4th in addition to the 3rd. After discussion, Ms. Bennett-Parker moved to approve the request. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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