



**Richmond Public Library Board**  
 101 E. Franklin Street  
 Richmond, VA 23219  
 (804) 646-4256 / fax: (804) 646-7685



**Library Board Meeting Minutes  
 May 26, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Chair William Yates, Vice Chair Christine Peterson, Emily Altman, Brent Graves Sheron Carter-Gunter, Gail Zwirner

**VIRTUAL:** Barbara Burton, Garrett Sawyer, Janet Woody

**ABSENT:** N/A

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Laura Drewry, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Jonah Butler, Adam Zimmerli, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair William Yates at 11:45 a.m. at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia. The public was noticed and could attend in person or by using Richmond Public Library YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/2VfKL9U>, where it was Live Streamed. A quorum was established.

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| <b>Agenda</b>  | Approve the May 26, 2021 Agenda as submitted:<br><i>Motion: Vice Chair Christine Peterson, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i><br><br><b>AYES: 9      NOES: 0      ABSTAIN: 0    Approved Unanimously.</b>  |
| <b>Consent Agenda</b>  | Approve the April 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes, Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted:<br><i>Motion: Vice Chair Christine Peterson, Second by Gail Zwirner</i><br><br><b>AYES: 9      NOES: 0      ABSTAIN: 0    Approved Unanimously.</b>   |
| <b>Public Comment Period</b>   | None Present   |
| <b>REPORTS</b>   |  |
| <b>Friends of the Library (FOL)</b><br><br><b><u>Ruth DeBoer</u></b> | Ms. DeBoer reported on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next Friends of the Library (FOL) meeting will be held on June 9, 2021.</li> <li>• Currently, donations are being taken by appointment only. People can email or call the FOL number for a date and time to drop off donations.</li> <li>• The Annual Meeting is in the planning stages for September timeframe.</li> <li>• The newsletter should be going out the end of June/early July timeframe.</li> </ul> <p>With the Master Plan starting up, Chair Yates asked Ms. DeBoer to evaluate the current inventory and after the Book Sale in November. Make a determination of items that have not sold in prior book sales should be taken out of inventory.</p> |

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

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| <p><b>Library Foundation</b><br/><br/><b><u>Susan Revere</u></b></p> | <p>Ms. Revere reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Centennial/Renovation:</b> A grant strategy was crafted for the next few months to prepare for the federal, state, city, and private dollars that may be offered. Focus is on infrastructure, book collection, children’s learning, and broadband.</li> </ul> <p>The community survey, developed by the Architects is being finalized and will be disseminated on various platforms in June. The plan is to meet with City Council members to bring them up to speed on the Library’s efforts before the survey goes out to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grant Activity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As follow up to the April report, the Foundation applied for a grant from The ALA COVID Library Relief Fund. The \$50,000 ask is to update our book collection through a DEI lens. Grant awards will be announced on June 23 and funds must be expended by December 31, 2021.</li> <li>○ The Foundation submitted a request to Dominion Energy in support of both the YAVA program in spring of 2022 and the RVA Reads Program this year.</li> <li>○ An LOI was submitted to Robins Foundation in their third and final Community Focus grant cycle of 2021. Based on Robin’s focus on Children and Education, the ask is for the RVA Reads Program, which aligns with two of Robins Focus areas (Children ages 0-18 and their parents/caregivers, and Ensuring children are prepared for kindergarten, engaged in school and thrive academically).</li> <li>○ When shopping on Amazon, please use AmazonSmile to benefit Richmond Public Library. Please ask your friends to do the same.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Upcoming Board Retreat:</b> The 3 Board Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, September 11 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm in the auditorium. Coffee and continental breakfast will be available from 8:30 am – 9:00 am. As it gets closer to the event, the agenda and supporting information needed for that day will be distributed. If you have questions, please reach out to Marshall Pearsall or Susan Revere.</li> </ul> |
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| <p><b>Administration</b><br/><br/><b><u>Scott Firestine</u></b></p> | <p><b>Highlights and Additions to Director’s Report:</b> Mr. Firestine reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waiting on the Governor to ease up COVID19 restrictions even more during his next update. If he does, then RPL will start putting furniture back in place and opening up meeting rooms.</li> <li>• Virtual programming will continue for the next 3-4 months. In-person programming will slowly begin to continue shortly thereafter, with focus on starting up in the fall.</li> </ul> |
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**BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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| <p><b>Chair</b><br/><b><u>William Yates</u></b></p> | <p>No Report.</p> <p>Chair Yates reminded Board Members that there will be a virtual FOIA Training scheduled for June 16 by the Clerk’s Office.</p> |
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**BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

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| <p><b>Finance Chair</b><br/><u>Garrett Sawyer</u></p>  | <p>Mr. Sawyer reported City Council adopted a City-wide budget of \$772.8M Budget to go in effect July 1, 2021. This does not include the \$160M the City should receive from the Federal American Rescue Plan.</p> <p>Mr. Firestine reported the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) passed as presented. The Library has two pages in the CIP, which has little to no funding for FY2022.</p> <p>Mr. Firestine reported with the hiring freeze and 9% Budget cut currently in place, the recommendation would be is to keep the service hours and staffing as is until the first of the first of the year.</p> <p>Ms. Burton inquired if there was a possibility to reinstate Saturday hours to the North Avenue, Hull Street, and East End Branches. Mr. Firestine shared the criteria of low performance on Saturdays, low foot traffic due to closure due to pandemic, poor circulation, and staff shortages with the hiring freeze and employees resigning has caused challenges for these sites to have six days open. The Board discussed several options that may or may not work to have the libraries open on Saturdays. After discussion, the LBOT concurred to do everything possible to reinstate Saturday operating hours back to North Avenue, Hull Street, and East End Branches as soon as possible.</p>  |
| <p><b>Facilities Chair</b><br/><u>Janet Woody</u></p>  | <p>Mr. Firestine reported the Facilities Committee met Steinberg Hart/KEi on May 7 to discuss assembling a survey to ask the Richmond community feedback on what they want to see and happen in their library, etc. The survey will be both electronic and paper format as well as in Spanish and English, added to social media, and available at Branches. Mr. Firestine will reach out to Council Members and the Mayor to ask for their feedback and to ask them to promote the survey. Mr. Firestine also asked the Board Members if they would reach out to 10 people with the survey to help promote and receive feedback. The goals is to have the data completed in August.</p> <p>Vice Chair Peterson requested adding meeting rooms to the survey.</p> <p>Ms. Woody reported and touched on the highlights of the May 7 meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding Principles – Useful during outreach and fundraising</li> <li>• Designing the Building – Wants/Needs/Issues/Concerns:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To be inclusive</li> <li>○ Be a reflection of the community</li> <li>○ Attractive and Fun – So people will want to visit</li> <li>○ Exhibit an activity space</li> <li>○ Be Net 0</li> <li>○ Have spaces with updated lighting and decor</li> <li>○ How to recognize the old building in the new building – Discussion only</li> <li>○ Access to the building and AV equipment</li> <li>○ Funding opportunity</li> <li>○ Issues: Parking</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Governance Chair</b><br/><u>Emily Altman</u></p> | <p>No report.</p>  |

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Strategic Plan Dashboard Update: Mr. Firestine gave an overview of the Strategic Plan Dashboard. Members discussed Goal 1: Children will enter school ready to learn, and will have resources to help them succeed academically. The Board Members focused on all items that had a problem with circumstances slowing progress, stopped completely, or put on hold.

Strategy 1d: Review School Board member attendance at Richmond Public Library Board Meeting: Mr. Sawyer texted The Honorable Shonda Harris-Muhammed to see if she would be interested in attending the next LBOT meeting. Ms. Pack will add Ms. Harris-Muhammed to the invitation of the June 23 meeting.

Chair Yates asked Board Members to review the Strategic Plan Dashboard and come to the next meeting with any questions or concerns with any of the sections they feel need attention when working on the new Strategic Plan.

Vice Chair Peterson added when looking at the new Strategic Plan to keep in mind equity, inclusion, and diversity to make sure we are doing the right thing, and if not, we should.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Approve Friday, June 18 for City observed holiday and Saturday, June 19 actual holiday of Juneteenth.

*Motion: Emily Altman, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter*

**AYES: 8 NOES: 1 ABSTAIN: 0 Approved.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:59 p.m. by unanimous consensus from the members that were present in the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street and by Zoom if needed.

Approved:   
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP  
Senior Executive Assistant