

RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 22, 2021

Main Library – Gellman Room
101 E. Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

11:45 a.m.

Note: Ordinance No. 2021-181: To extend the expiration date of Ord. No. 2020-093, adopted Apr. 9, 2020, as previously amended by Ord. No. 2020-183, adopted Aug. 20, 2020, and Ord. No. 2020-232, adopted Dec. 14, 2020, which assures the continuity of government during the disaster resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic by modifying the practices and procedures of public bodies to permit electronic meetings as authorized by Va. Code § 15.2-1413, from Jun. 30, 2021, to Dec. 31, 2021.



Richmond Public Library Board

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



Library Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

11:45 a.m.

A G E N D A

Call to order:	11:45 a.m.	Mr. William Yates
Agenda		Mr. William Yates
Consent Agenda:		Mr. William Yates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of Minutes-July 28, 2021 Regular Meeting• Approval of the Minutes-August 18, 2021 Working Session Meeting• Approval of Statistical Report• Approval of Pending Deposited Gifts Report		
Public Comment Period:		
Reports:	12:00 p.m.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library Friends• Library Foundation• Administration Reports		Ms. DeBoer/Mr. Dishon Ms. Revere Mr. Firestine
Board Committee Reports:	12:10 p.m.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman• Finance Committee• Facilities Committee• Governance Committee		Mr. Yates Mr. Sawyer Ms. Woody Ms. Altman
Unfinished Business	12:30 p.m.	Mr. Yates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DRAFT 2022-2027 Strategic Plan – Tabled to October 27, 2021 Meeting		
New Business	12:40 p.m.	Mr. Yates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hours/Closures/Access/Staffing Discussion		
Adjourn		Mr. Yates
Next Meeting:		
October 27, 2021 Meeting at 11:45 a.m.		
Location: Main Library, 101 E. Franklin Street		

Library Board Meeting Minutes - **DRAFT**

July 28, 2021

PRESENT: Chair William Yates, Vice Chair Christine Peterson, Emily Altman, Barbara Burton, Sheron Carter-Gunter, Brent Graves, Janet Woody, Gail Zwirner

VIRTUAL: Garrett Sawyer

ABSENT: Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Laura Drewry, Cheryl Clarke, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Jonah Butler

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.

Agenda	Approve the July 28, 2021 Agenda as submitted: <i>Motion: Gail Zwirner, Second by Christine Peterson</i> <i>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> Mr. Sawyer was absent during the vote.
Consent Agenda	Approve the June 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes, Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Emily Altman, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i> <i>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> Mr. Sawyer was absent during the vote.
Public Comment Period	None Present
REPORTS	
Friends of the Library (FOL) <u>Clay Dishon</u>	In Ms. DeBoer's absence, Clay Dishon reported on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the process of scheduling a Member Only sale on Saturday, August 28, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. COVID safety protocols and available volunteers will play a factor in having the sale.• Annual Meeting – Tentative: Late September/October, depending on a speaker schedule.• Fall Book Sale – Tentative: November 5-6, 2021.• Half-Price Sale/Bag Sale for Educators only – Tentative: Mid to late November 2021.• In lieu of a Fall Book Drive for CY2021, the FOL will gather volunteers to do some weeding and straightening of the sale area. Also looking to gather a short list of charities that would be interested in a donation of books leftover from sales.

REPORTS (CONTINUED)	
Library Foundation <u>Susan Revere</u>	<p>Ms. Revere reported on the following:</p> <p>Foundation Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participated in the Community Workshop on July 15, 2021. For anyone unable to attend, the Zoom recording was shared on the Library website and will go out to the LibraryAware list on July 30 with the assistance of East End Branch Manager Adam Zimmerli. • Ms. Revere encouraged Board Members to share the recording and suggest any feedback and input with her and Mr. Firestine. • Names will be pulled for the Survey Respondent prizes. Winners will be notified the end of July (319 individuals gave their contact information). <p>Grant/Fundraising Activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mr. Firestine and RPL Technology Coordinator Nan Agaram submitted the E-Rate ARPA grant. Mr. Firestine reported RPL was working out some of the challenges with administering the funds for the laptops and hotspots. He also shared the grant request is for \$26,350.00. The funds will be used to purchase Envisionware hardware/software self-service scan/fax platform. Total cost of the project is \$40,555. RPL will provide the difference, \$14,205 from the RPL special technology funds or general operating funds. 2. Foundation is grateful to Dominion Charitable Foundation, which awarded a \$1,500 grant to YAVA (Jenn Deuell) and \$1,500 to RVA Reads (Barbara Crump). 3. Amazon Smile had 22 supporters of the Richmond Public Library, which is now up to 30 supporters. Please continue to share this opportunity with friends and family.
Administration <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Highlights and Additions to Director's Report: Mr. Firestine reported on highlights and additions from the Director's Report on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was good participation with library locations being vaccination sites. • Circulations numbers were starting to rise slowly. There is still a concern of the virus. • More planning of the in-person programs are in process. • There is Federal Legislation coming through this budget reconciliation for Build America's Libraries Act. Funds would be used for construction and renovations of the library buildings.
BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Chair <u>William Yates</u>	<p>No Formal Report.</p> <p>Chair Yates mentioned the current LBOT's focus should be around obtaining money that is available for the Master Plan and working with the City.</p> <p>The City sent out a survey to the community on how government funds should be spent once received. The discussion was around the Library not being listed as an option and the Board advocated a response to the City. Chair Yates suggested moving this topic to new business for further discussion.</p>
Finance Chair <u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>No Formal Report.</p> <p>Mr. Sawyer mentioned the organization, Richmond Together, added in a Style Weekly Opinion article the importance of allocating dollars to address some of the needs within the Richmond Public Library. He also shared his vision of ARPA funds with Public Libraries.</p> <p>No questions were asked on the end of year Monthly and Operations Budget.</p>

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)	
Facilities Chair <u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Ms. Woody reported on the Public Event meeting with the architects, which was also recorded. The meeting attendance was low, but there was a lot of information and ideas that came out of the meeting. Ms. Woody encouraged members to watch the recording. The next day the Committee met with architects to review the discussion and decide what could work and what would not work out of the ideas presented at the meeting, then streamline the information even further. Parking was a big concern.
Governance Chair <u>Emily Altman</u>	No report.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
No Unfinished Business discussed.	
NEW BUSINESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: Having an in-person Work Session Meeting for August 18, 2021, at the Main Library in the Auditorium to discuss the 2022-2027 DRAFT Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives from the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan that will be in line with the Master Plan and funding requirements. Approve an In-person Work Session Meeting to be Scheduled for August 18, 2021: <i>Motion: Gail Zwirner, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i> <i>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> Mr. Sawyer and Ms. Peterson was absent during the vote. City of Richmond Survey Discussion: Ms. Peterson suggested doing a “Call to Action”. She update the membes on The American Rescue Plan Act, which is a law passed by the United States Congress allocating \$154 million in federal relief funding to the City of Richmond. The City will receive it in two payments of \$77 million, a year apart. The City sent out a survey and the call to action is to have people complete the survey and share it widely with friends and family and ask them to share it, and so on. The survey will run until August 9 to be completed, but needs to be done as soon as possible. After the survey closes, the City will put together a draft spending plan. Everyone has a chance to weigh in and then the final plan heads to Council for approval. The request will also go out on social media. 	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:06 p.m. by unanimous consensus from the members that were present in the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, for an in-person Work Session Meeting at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, virtual resources will not be available.

Note: The next Regular Meeting scheduled will be held Wednesday, September 22, 2021. Chair Yates sent out an email on September 14, to change the meeting location to the Main Library (Gellman Room) located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23221.

Approved: _____

Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP
Senior Executive Assistant

Library Board Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

August 18, 2021

PRESENT: Chair William Yates, Vice Chair Christine Peterson, Emily Altman, Barbara Burton, Sheron Carter-Gunter, Janet Woody, Gail Zwirner

ABSENT: Brent Graves, Garrett Sawyer, Attorney Laura Drewry

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere

An in-person Work Session Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair William Yates at 9:00 a.m. at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia. No one from the public was present.

LBOT members discussed possible edits to the existing 2016-2021 Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives to be incorporated with suggested new items for a DRAFT 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. Chair Yates asked Mr. Firestine to create a 2022-2027 DRAFT Strategic Plan from the discussion to be presented at the September 22, 2021, meeting for further review. Members present concurred with Chair Yates. At that time, another work session date will be decided if needed.

The next Regular Meeting of the LBOT is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at the Belmont Branch Library located at 3100 Ellwood Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m. with a short tour of the Main Library for members wishing to attend.

Approved: _____

Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP
Senior Executive Assistant

Director's Report August/September 2021

Director Activities:

Aug 2 City Council Meeting
Aug 4 RPL Friends of the Library Meeting – Main Library
Aug 5 Participated in Interviews – Adult Services Consultant Position
Aug 6 RPL CATS Grant Project – Virtual Meeting
Aug 10 Participated in Leadership Training Discussion with RPL Staff – Main
Aug 10 Caitlyn RTD Meeting – Virtual
Aug 10 BLUEcloud Analytics Call 2 RCPL and SirsiDynix – Virtual
Aug 11 2022-2027 Strategic Plan Discussion with Branch Managers and Supervisors – Main
Aug 12 Racial Equity Virtual Meeting with Mayor's Office
Aug 13 Master Plan Progress Review with Architect – Virtual
Aug 20 FY23-27 CIP Kickoff Meeting – Virtual
Sep 1 RPL Friend Board Meeting – Main Library
Sep 6 Holiday – Labor Day: All Library Locations Closed
Sep 8 Foundation Executive Committee Meeting – Virtual
Sep 8 RPL Master Plan Committee Meeting with Architects – Virtual
Sep 9 Discuss Library Open Audit Recommendations with City Auditors – Virtual
Sep 9 RPL Master Plan Followup Discussion with Architects – Virtual
Sep 10 Greening Richmond Public Libraries Plan Revisions Meeting – Virtual
Sep 10 Discuss Broadband Affordability with CAO Office – Virtual
Sep 13 Budget & Strategic Planning Portfolio Assignment Discussion – Virtual
Sep 15 RPL Foundation Full Board Meeting/Meet and Greet – Main Library

Hiring:

- September: Submitted the following hire requisitions:
 - Library Associate-Web Design (0188) – Main Library – **Approved**; posted 9/13/2021
 - Library Technician, Senior (0049) – North Avenue Branch Library – **Approved**; posted 9/13/2021
 - Library Technician (0026) – East End Branch Library – **Approved**; posted 9/15/2021
 - Library Associate YS (0069) – Belmont Branch Library – **Denied**, pending further information
 - Library Associate YS (0072) – North Avenue Branch Library – **Denied**, pending further information
 - Library/Community Services Manager (0096) – Main Library – **Denied**
 - Library Technician (PTE) (0185) – Main Library – **Denied**
- Main Library Full-time Library Associate-Web Design Jonah Butler resigned effective August 25, 2021.
- North Avenue Full-time Library Technician Kelsey McMahon resigned effective September 16, 2021.
- Hull Street Full-time Library Associate-YS Jewel Murray resigned effective September 17, 2021.
- Hiring freeze still in effect.

Richmond Public Library (RPL)/Richmond Public Schools (RPS) Partnership: RPL's Youth Services Team Beth Morris and Jenn Deuell partnered with Judy Deichman of RPS to coordinate an initiative for Back to School/Library Card Signup Month. This year, *every* student at RPS received a Library Card Registration Card in their Back to School packets. We will be working with school librarians to ensure that any child who returns the registration card to the school gets registered with a library card. Students also have the option to return their registration directly to one of our branches and receive their library card immediately. RPL Library Support Supervisor Sheila Tyler will be tracking this effort to see the success rate.

Digital Services:

Ask-A-Librarian (June 30 – August 31, 2021):

Questions via Chat	Questions via Text or Email	Total
5	49	54

RPL @ Home Newsletter (June 30 – August 31, 2021):

Issue Date	Number of Subscribers	Grand Total of Emails Sent
7/2	22,811	22,811
7/9	22,773	45,584
7/14	22,723	68,307
7/23	22,667	90,974
7/30	22,627	113,601
8/13	22,516	136,117
8/20	22,482	158,599

Social Media (June 30 – August 31, 2021):

Platform	Followers (Jun 30)	Followers (Aug 31)	Net Trend	New Posts	Total Post/Page Views
Facebook	3,789	3,811	+10	25	8,246 (approx.)
Instagram	3,196	3,255	+59	24	N/A
Twitter	1,599	1,614	+15	52	7134
YouTube	170	176	+6	16	765
Discord (Teens)	27	27	0	N/A	N/A

*We have been unable to use Discord on any work computers due to a change in DIT security protocols. We have been trying to resolve this issue with DIT, but have so far been unsuccessful.

Other New Digital Programs:

- Virtual Children Programs
 - Virtual Storytimes – 14
 - Mini Masterpieces – 7
 - Colorful Craft Kits – 15
 - Colorwalk Kits – 1
 - Storytime Unwind on Facebook Live – Every Friday
 - Middle Grade Monday on Facebook Live – Every Monday
- Virtual Young Adult (Teen) Programs
 - Get Crafty Together – 10
- Virtual Adult Programs
 - Book Clubs:
 - North Avenue Fiction Focus Senior Book Club – 7
 - First Chapters Book Discussion – 6
 - Virtual Chair Yoga with Cheryl Clarke – 2
 - Get That Gig! – 2
 - “Walk the Ward”: Part 3 of The JXN Project Summer Lecture Series – 48
 - “Choose Our Fate – Locked in at the Library” Collaborative Story – 48

CIRCULATION FY22														
LOCATION	FY	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	Total
Belmont	FY19	8,429	8,074	8,103	7,888	7,303	6,144	7,099	6,630	8,077	6,712	6,436	7,110	88,005
	FY20	7,451	7,560	7,207	7,097	5,795	5,963	6,495	6,449	3,028	11	6	1,044	58,106
	FY21	4,292	4,463	3,675	3,715	3,895	3,662	3,663	3,576	3,888	3,924	5,400	6,455	50,608
	FY22	10,105	7,973											18,078
Broad Rock	FY19	3,910	3,609	2,671	3,217	2,505	2,086	2,488	2,801	2,843	2,389	2,419	3,119	34,057
	FY20	3,652	3,036	2,939	2,998	2,323	2,389	2,331	2,347	1,166	5	10	291	23,487
	FY21	1,570	1,791	1,373	1,277	1,254	1,203	1,115	913	1,096	954	979	1,403	14,928
	FY22	2,105	2,733											4,838
East End	FY19	2,996	2,648	2,614	2,820	2,587	2,176	2,915	2,451	2,249	2,046	2,087	2,534	30,123
	FY20	2,696	2,663	2,476	2,574	2,020	2,240	2,219	2,431	1,061	15	0	381	20,776
	FY21	1,431	1,738	1,493	1,493	1,599	1,621	1,673	1,427	1,575	1,539	1768	2,317	19,674
	FY22	2,519	2,799											5,318
Ginter Park	FY19	5,211	5,163	4,864	4,278	3,762	2,812	3,864	3,653	4,408	3,384	4,174	4,381	49,954
	FY20	4,397	4,580	4,030	3,823	3,332	3,021	3,599	3,327	1,690	0	0	736	32,535
	FY21	2,829	3,198	2,523	2,227	1,992	1,836	1,906	2,019	2,278	2380	2953	3,965	30,106
	FY22	4,175	4,452											8,627
Hull Street	FY19	2,010	2,305	3,323	1,844	1,838	1,852	2,287	1,870	1,854	1,828	1,976	2,026	25,013
	FY20	3,082	1,912	2,065	2,508	2,128	2,012	2,012	1,846	1,020	6	14	377	18,982
	FY21	873	1,231	916	1,231	1,135	1,108	1,254	825	1,368	1,432	1,555	1,481	14,409
	FY22	1,884	2,141											4,025
Main	FY19	8,719	8,877	8,655	9,774	9,099	8,202	9,418	8,749	9,621	9,177	8,795	9,300	108,386
	FY20	10,098	9,666	8,766	9,068	7,683	7,728	8,141	8,884	4,104	1,067	40	916	76,161
	FY21	4,804	4,167	3,259	3,252	3,164	3,266	2,909	2,750	3,071	3,714	4,652	5,589	44,597
	FY22	6,925	7,554											14,479

CIRCULATION FY22 (CONTINUED)														
LOCATION	FY	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	Total
North Avenue	FY19	2,979	2,493	2,709	2,918	2,390	2,059	2,604	2,264	2,367	2,887	2,243	2,657	30,570
	FY20	2,962	2,210	2,462	2,197	1,689	1,925	2,731	1,722	865	91	15	170	19,039
	FY21	692	820	695	526	750	891	689	566	870	1,345	2,007	1,878	11,729
	FY22	2,003	2,229											4,232
West End	FY19	11,660	11,438	10,076	10,172	8,539	7,313	9,145	7,434	9,007	8,380	8,746	9,681	111,591
	FY20	11,712	10,702	9,142	8,743	8,067	8,072	9,006	9,183	4,541	80	127	1,897	81,272
	FY21	6,888	6,701	5,819	5,107	5,039	5,639	5,192	4,873	5,769	6,685	9,084	10,859	77,655
	FY22	12,036	12,125											24,161
Westover Hills	FY19	8,071	7,787	7,566	7,102	6,120	5,364	7,072	6,155	6,511	6,120	5,793	6,435	80,096
	FY20	7,419	7,175	5,888	6,137	5,631	5,376	6,043	6,342	2,946	70	8	1,561	54,596
	FY21	5,425	6,884	5,627	5,513	4,323	4,315	4,074	4,151	4,815	4,246	4,702	6,244	60,319
	FY22	7,604	8,163											15,767
E-Content	FY19	5,985	6,407	5,683	5,581	5,278	5,874	6,375	5,874	6,532	6,132	6,424	6,798	72,943
	FY20	7,526	7,283	6,250	5,145	4,926	5,365	6,125	5,380	6,643	9,558	11,344	10,649	86,194
	FY21	12,811	12,564	11,976	11,413	10,990	13,742	14,912	15,034	15,990	12,429	12,782	12,108	156,751
	FY22	12,630	13,139											25,769
TOTALS	FY19	59,970	58,801	56,264	55,594	49,421	43,882	53,267	47,881	53,469	49,055	49,093	54,041	630,738
	FY20	60,995	56,787	51,225	50,290	43,594	44,091	48,702	47,911	27,064	10,903	11,564	18,022	471,148
	FY21	41,615	43,557	37,356	35,754	34,141	37,283	37,387	36,134	40,720	38,648	45,882	52,299	480,776
	FY22	61,986	63,308	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	125,294

PROGRAMS FY2022	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	TOTAL FY22	TOTAL FY21
Belmont														
Adult Programs	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Adult Attend	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	38
Young Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juvenile Programs	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Juvenile Attend	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0
Total Attend	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	38
Total Programs	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Broad Rock														
Adult Programs	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Adult Attend	68	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	53
Young Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juvenile Programs	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	9
Juvenile Attend	55	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61	84
Total Attend	123	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	180	137
Total Programs	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	10
East End														
Adult Programs	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2
Adult Attend	0	102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	102	35
Young Adult Programs	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	3
Young Adult Attend	37	71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	108	10
Juvenile Programs	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	5
Juvenile Attend	40	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	144	23
Total Attend	77	277	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	354	68
Total Programs	11	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	10

PROGRAMS FY2022 (CONTINUED)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	TOTAL FY22	TOTAL FY21
Ginter Park														
Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juvenile Programs	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2
Juvenile Attend	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	8
Total Attend	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	8
Total Programs	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2
Hull Street														
Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juvenile Programs	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	16
Juvenile Attend	21	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	137
Total Attend	21	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	137
Total Programs	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	16
Main														
Adult Programs	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	6
Adult Attend	652	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	705	34
Young Adult Programs	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Young Adult Attend	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	27
Juvenile Programs	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	2
Juvenile Attend	29	81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	110	17
Total Attend	685	134	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	819	78
Total Programs	9	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	10

PROGRAMS FY2022 (CONTINUED)	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	TOTAL FY22	TOTAL FY21
North Avenue														
Adult Programs	6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8
Adult Attend	25	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	273
Young Adult Programs	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	17
Young Adult Attend	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	102
Juvenile Programs	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Juvenile Attend	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	0
Total Attend	58	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	93	375
Total Programs	11	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	25
West End														
Adult Programs	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7
Adult Attend	8	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	51
Young Adult Programs	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Young Adult Attend	7	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8
Juvenile Programs	11	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	10
Juvenile Attend	133	147	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	280	215
Total Attend	148	209	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	357	274
Total Programs	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	18
Westover Hills														
Adult Programs	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
Adult Attend	3	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	11
Young Adult Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Adult Attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Juvenile Programs	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5
Juvenile Attend	71	248	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	319	386
Total Attend	74	258	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	332	397
Total Programs	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7
Grand Total Attend	1,213	991	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,204	1,512
Grand Total Programs	63	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	124	100

DOOR COUNT FY2022	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	TOTAL
Belmont	3,415	3,785											7,200
Broad Rock	2,721	3,917											6,638
East End	2,719	2,531											5,250
Ginter Park	2,237	2,820											5,057
Hull Street	2,636	2,351											4,987
Main	6,480	7,114											13,594
North Avenue	3,104	3,228											6,332
West End	3,040	2,373											5,413
Westover Hills	4,333	4,500											8,833
TOTALS FY22:	30,685	32,619											63,304
TOTALS FY21:	15,077	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,689	15,223	23,380	74,369
TOTALS FY20:	81,759	79,026	71,250	70,158	57,245	52,729	62,154	64,890	30,917	-	-	-	570,128

NOTE: COVID-19 Impact. Door Count is specific only to when libraries were open to the public. RPL reopened to the public on April 5, 2021 moving towards expanding services.

COMPUTER USE FY2022	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	TOTAL
Belmont Workstation	455	488											943
WIFI	310	18											328
Broad Rock Workstation	550	316											866
WIFI	189	-											189
East End Workstation	576	599											1,175
WIFI	158	-											158
Ginter Park Workstation	425	433											858
WIFI	285	190											475
Hull Street Workstation	437	549											986
WIFI	262	241											503
Main Workstation	1,125	1,286											2,411
WIFI	1,081	1,672											2,753
North Avenue Workstation	526	666											1,192
WIFI	139	-											139
West End Workstation	336	326											662
WIFI	219	8											227
Westover Hills Workstation	461	507											968
WIFI	334	154											488
TOTALS FY22:	7,868	7,453	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,321
TOTALS FY21:	6,529	1,836	2,417	2,660	2,907	2,853	2,116	1,842	2,413	3,544	4,354	6,353	39,824
TOTALS FY20:	28,117	28,674	26,036	27,447	21,130	22,167	25,353	25,300	12,723	1,500	792	1,612	220,851

NOTE: August Report: Broad Rock, East End, and North Avenue Branches were effected by a glitch in the DIT system where WIFI totals could not be captured in this report.

TECHNICAL SERVICES - ITEMS BY LOCATION										
FY2022	Belmont	Broad Rock	East End	Ginter Park	Hull Street	MAIN	North Avenue	West End	Westover Hills	OverDrive
Jul-21	229	124	179	139	132	392	125	245	189	80
Aug-21	263	172	151	156	142	297	131	327	221	223
Sep-21										
Oct-21										
Nov-21										
Dec-21										
Jan-22										
Feb-22										
Mar-22										
Apr-22										
May-22										
Jun-22										
Branch Total FY22:	492	296	330	295	274	689	256	572	410	303
Branch Total FY21:	2,800	1,659	1,765	1,822	1,466	4,525	1,443	3,393	2,377	3,156
Average:	246	148	165	148	137	345	128	286	205	152

NEW PATRON CARDS													
FY2022	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	Total
Belmont	114	134											248
Broad Rock	45	61											106
East End	47	48											95
Ginter Park	28	37											65
Hull Street	70	60											130
Main	217	237											454
North Avenue	63	50											113
West End	75	85											160
Westover Hills	79	78											157
Online Reg E-Card	317	428											745
Total FY22:	1,055	1,218	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,273
Total FY21:	648	464	717	455	392	423	395	420	432	594	758	988	6,686

Richmond Public Library
FY22 Operating Budget
as of Aug 31, 2021

ACCOUNT	DESCRIPTION	Budget	Actual and Encumbered 31-Aug-21	% Spent	Balance Available 31-Aug-21
60000	SALARIES - FULL TIME	\$ 2,803,989	\$ 340,114	12.1%	\$ 2,463,875
61000	SALARIES - PART TIME	\$ 177,086	\$ 18,679	10.5%	\$ 158,407
62000	SALARIES - TEMPORARY	\$ 10,000	\$ 1,834	0.0%	\$ 8,166
63000	FICA	\$ 185,446	\$ 21,326	11.5%	\$ 164,119
63001	RET CON RSRs	\$ 653,698	\$ 79,493	12.2%	\$ 574,205
63002	MEDCARE FICA	\$ 43,370	\$ 4,988	11.5%	\$ 38,383
63003	GROUP LIFE	\$ 17,471	\$ 2,888	16.5%	\$ 14,583
63006	H/C ACT TEMP	\$ 589,620	\$ 74,615	12.7%	\$ 515,005
63008	STATE UNEMPLOYMENT	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
63011	HEALTH SAVINGS	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
64104	EDUCATION PAY	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
64105	BONUS PAY	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
64110	VRIP INCENTIVE	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
Personnel Expenses		\$ 4,480,680	\$ 543,936	12.1%	\$ 3,936,744
71141	BOOKS	\$ 519,105	\$ 398,638	76.8%	\$ 120,467
71141	DATABASES	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
71142	MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTS	\$ 2,456	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 2,456
72122	MAGS & NEWSPAPER	\$ 29,277	\$ 270	0.9%	\$ 29,007
Collection Development		\$ 550,838	\$ 398,909	72.4%	\$ 151,929
70131	ADVERTISING	\$ 2,297	\$ 550	23.9%	\$ 1,747
70161	PLANNING MGMT SERVICES	\$ 223,055	\$ 67,851	30.4%	\$ 155,204
70218	VEHICLE REPAIR	\$ 2,650	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 2,650
70412	TRANSPORTATION	\$ -	\$ 700	0.0%	\$ (700)
70311	PRINTED SUPPLIES	\$ 3,000	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 3,000
70413	MILEAGE ALLOWANCE	\$ 2,263	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 2,263
70551	SECURITY	\$ 294,543	\$ 66,781	22.7%	\$ 227,762
70552	CONTRACT AND TEMP PERSONNEL	\$ 22,000	\$ 13,859	63.0%	\$ 8,141
71012	OFFICE STATIONARY SUPPLIES	\$ 3,047	\$ 207	6.8%	\$ 2,840
71016	ADVERTISING	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
71143	LIBRARY OPERATING SUPPLIES	\$ 19,220	\$ 1,007	5.2%	\$ 18,213
72113	POSTAGE	\$ 4,456	\$ 500	11.2%	\$ 3,956
72121	CONFERENCES & CON	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
72123	MEMBERSHIP DUES	\$ 677	\$ 6,000	886.3%	\$ (5,323)
72124	TRAINING	\$ 297	\$ 20	6.7%	\$ 277
72131	COMPUTER SUPPLIES	\$ 25,662	\$ 8,959	34.9%	\$ 16,703
72153	EQUIPMENT	\$ 12,200	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 12,200
73104	BANK FEES	\$ -	\$ 718	0.0%	\$ (718)
76119	PAGERS	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
77103	FUEL-D/O VEHICLE	\$ 1,921	\$ 131	6.8%	\$ 1,790
77104	VEHICLE MONTHLY STANDING	\$ 493	\$ 41	8.3%	\$ 452
77201	INTERNAL PRINTING	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
77501	DIT CHARGES	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
80001	DEPRECIATION	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
80004	BUILDINGS & STR	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
80006	EQUIPMENT & OFFICE MAINTENANCE	\$ 7,160	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 7,160
80007	VEHICLE EXPENSES	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
95002	OPERATING TRANS	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%	\$ -
Other Expenses		\$ 624,941	\$ 167,325	26.8%	\$ 457,616
TOTAL GENERAL FUND		\$ 5,656,459	\$ 1,110,169	19.6%	\$ 4,546,290

Monthly Budget Report

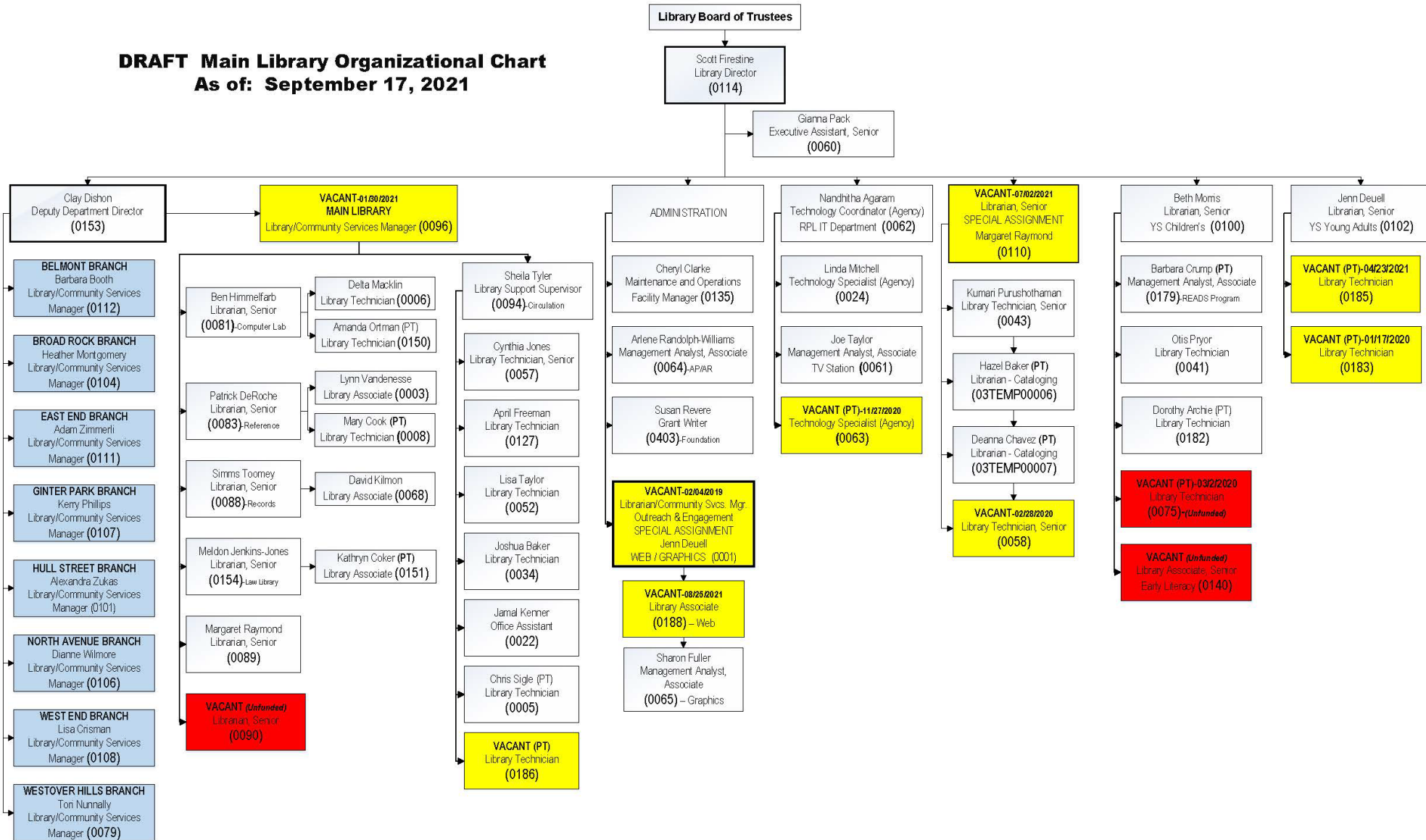
August 31, 2021

Richmond Public Library
Foundation, Friends, Groups and Individual Donations
FY 2022

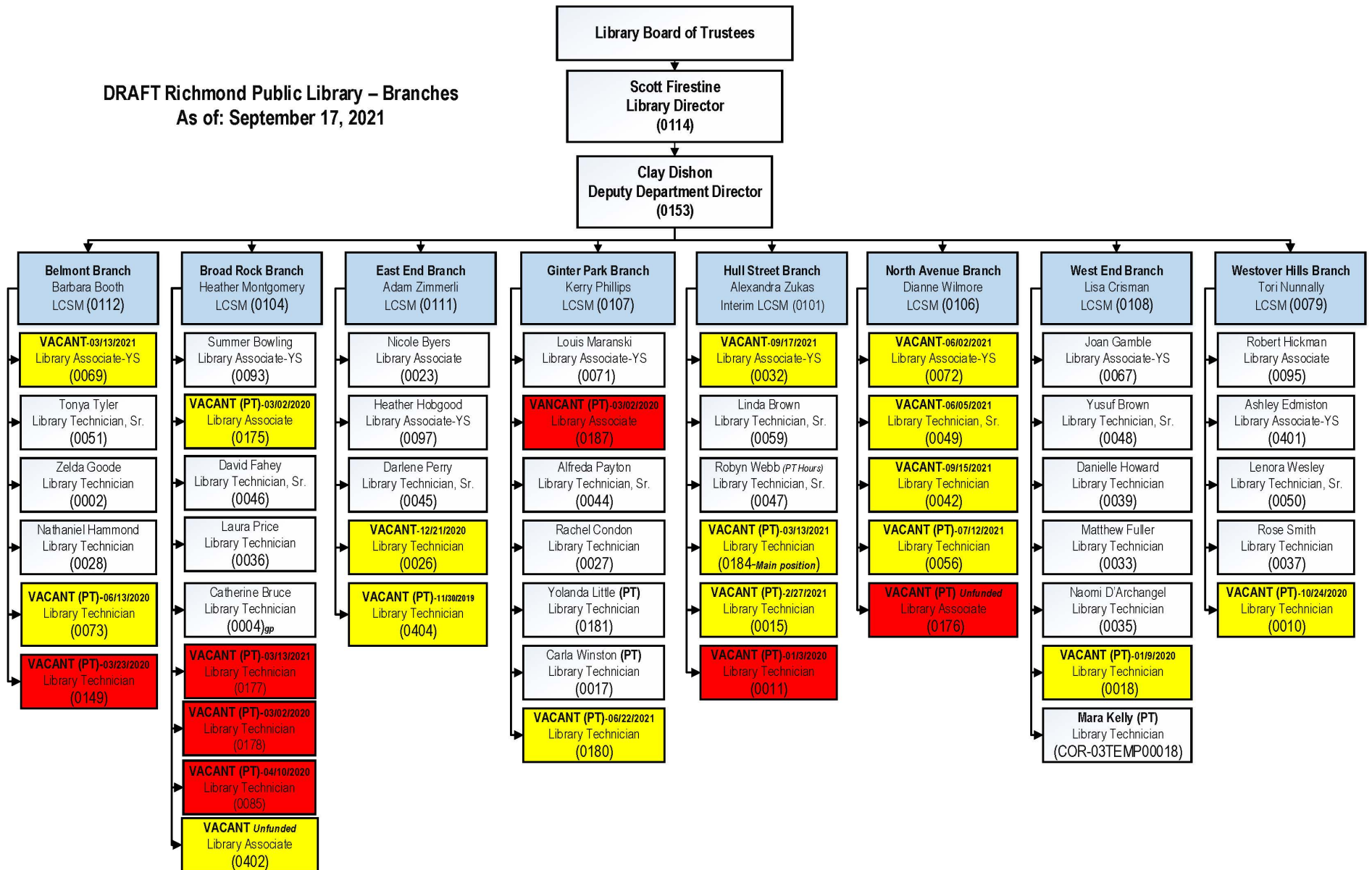
Consent Agenda: Deposited Gifts Over \$100 Shown
as of September 22, 2021

Date of Check	Donor Name	Current Month	Purpose/Location	YTD Account Balance		
				Gift	Foundation	Friends
	<i>No DONATIONS this month</i>					
	Monthly Total	\$ -				
	YTD Total	\$ -	Year To Date Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

**DRAFT Main Library Organizational Chart
As of: September 17, 2021**



DRAFT Richmond Public Library – Branches
As of: September 17, 2021



Serving the community

Scott Firestine column: Let's write Richmond's next chapter by investing in our libraries

https://richmond.com/opinion/columnists/scott-firestine-column-let-s-write-richmond-s-next-chapter-by-investing-in-our-libraries/article_b515a1d3-a1f1-5523-9697-bf68df9a3656.html

Richmond Times-Dispatch / Date: 7/29/2021

As early as 1812, a century before Richmond Public Library was established, the city saw opportunities to create a place where citizens could go to learn, relax and read to their hearts' content. There were attempts to create libraries for public use, though few would be what we would consider a public library today.

Some 209 years later, our greatest challenge is having the resources to provide library service that is equitable to all. It's a complicated history, a disparity remains among social classes in our city and the impact of 100 years of systemic racism is very apparent in our library.

Buildings, books, digital services and programming are not where they should be for a library that serves Virginia's capital city. Furniture, fixtures and equipment are aging and dilapidated.

At some point, all libraries need to be updated, repaired or replaced. Yet federal funding for libraries ended in 1997, and libraries are left to cover costs themselves — a daunting and nearly insurmountable hurdle for cities like ours.

We receive some state aid, but it is far below what would make an impact for our community. With Congress at work on what currently is a \$3.5 trillion infrastructure package, now is the time to pass the bipartisan Build America's Libraries Act.

This legislation will dedicate \$5 billion to the construction and renovation of libraries in underserved communities nationwide, an estimated \$117 million of which would be allocated for Virginia.

Richmond Public Library serves a population with a 23% poverty rate and a 73% high school graduation rate. Branches are spread across the city with collections and services curated for the people who live, work and play in nine different neighborhoods.

Our libraries are vital in helping community members get online for research and job searching. We provide ladders to economic opportunity by providing first-time home buying assistance, homework help in Spanish and English, financial and personal bookkeeping classes, and tutoring, to name a few services.

Library staff members often assist residents with low literacy who can't find help elsewhere. We offer so much more than physical books. We deliver access to information, electronic books, computers, Wi-Fi, copiers and fax service desperately needed by an impoverished community that often cannot afford to purchase those items.



Additionally, we work with partners such as AARP and the city of Richmond's Office of Community Wealth Building, an antipoverty initiative that provides support for residents seeking work.

The library of the 20th century is not designed to serve 21st-century information needs.

For starters, the Build America's Libraries Act could allow us to renovate the Main Library to provide free parking. This is the No. 1 barrier to residents who wish to use our services. And while we have space at the Main Library, a renovation would help us evolve with the community we serve, especially postpandemic.

We need study rooms, coworking spaces and community spaces for people to come together and share information. We would like to offer a space for artisans and craftspeople to demonstrate their crafts; spaces that promote family learning and that can have a magical impact on minds; and study spaces where people can come if they need to be with other people or have a respite from their current living conditions.

Our branch libraries all are undersized, and we could add larger, better equipped spaces for community programs and activities for lifelong education, as well as study rooms and coworking spaces.

Libraries are crucial to achieving educational and digital equity and access, and expanding economic opportunity for all. The Virginia Library Association stands with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) in protest of the racism, discrimination, pain and sorrow that marginalized communities have experienced for too long.

William Faulkner, the beloved author of Southern literature, wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." In Virginia, the era of racial segregation is only a few decades behind us.

Many of Richmond's libraries were designed and built in that era, and they reflected that era's cruel logic about who public services like libraries were intended to serve.

Today, we aspire to be a library for all Richmonders. It's time to upgrade our library buildings to ensure they reflect that vision.

Scott Firestine is director of the Richmond Public Library. Contact him at: scott.firestine@richmondgov.com

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Style Weekly; July 6, 2021: <https://www.styleweekly.com/richmond/opinion-a-rare-opportunity/content?oid=17639670>

OPINION: A Rare Opportunity

Richmond's leaders need to take full advantage of American Rescue Plan funds to address core inequality issues.

By: Teresa Caviness, Garrett Sawyer, and Thad Williamson



When asked why the city doesn't embrace more aggressive approaches to combating poverty and redressing gaping inequities, Richmond elected officials have for decades defaulted to two responses.

First, leaders point to the fiscal limitations on city government. Each year during budget discussions, we start with high hopes for tackling problems like poverty. Then the reality of budget limitations sinks in and the option of being bold and transformative fades into a distant aspiration. Yes, dollars have been carved out for promising new approaches, such as the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the Office of Community Wealth Building, but these initiatives still fall well short

of meeting Richmond's tremendous and long-standing challenges. Sadly, we even see that other core government functions suffer neglect as well.

Recent mayors have tried to boost local revenues through ambitious development plans or tax-increase proposals, only to find stiff opposition from much of the public and ultimately City Council. A targeted increase in the meals tax to benefit schools and the introduction of a cigarette tax were adopted in 2018 and 2019, but only after considerable conflict and drama. The notion that most taxpayers, who already pay by far the highest property taxes in the region, could be convinced to support significant property tax increases to fund local government services has been tried and found wanting. See 2019.

Second, leaders point to the limitations on municipal power under Virginia's system of local government. Got a creative idea to address a social problem and make more money for the city? That's great, but if the Virginia General Assembly hasn't specifically authorized your local government to undertake such an activity, the city's lawyers aren't going to allow you to go forward with the idea.

That's the practical consequence of the Dillon Rule. In the many years when Republicans controlled one or both houses in the General Assembly, conventional City Hall wisdom was that efforts to get the General Assembly to assign more powers to Richmond, or localities in general, would be pointless or even counterproductive.

Fast forward to summer 2021 and the facts on the ground have changed on both fronts, at least for now. What remains to be seen is whether legacy thinking in City Hall can also change to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the American Rescue Plan's significant package of assistance to the Richmond.

The plan, passed by Congress in March, includes direct aid to localities to assist with recovery from the health and economic consequences of the pandemic and to offset lost revenue from the 2020 economic downturn. That assistance will total \$154.9 million for Richmond. Funds must be assigned to a specific use by Dec. 31, 2024, and must be spent no later than Dec. 31, 2026.

In effect, this funding provides a boost to the city budget of nearly \$39 million a year over the next four years. That's equivalent to roughly 5% of the city's annual operational budget – a boost far beyond any plausible tax increase or the wildest promises of any economic development project.

These funds must be used strategically to address the city's long-term needs. Our organization, Richmond Together, has outlined a **detailed plan** for spending \$116 million of these funds on core needs related to poverty, housing, and government functioning. (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C17V6UjUdEEy2VZmclrS4anY0yBB9ZT/view?form=MY01SV&OCID=MY01SV>)

Specific proposals in our plan include ramping up workforce and youth employment initiatives of the Office of Community Wealth Building, supporting minority and local-owned businesses, investments in fighting homelessness, supporting the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, supporting early childhood education, creating a human services crisis relief fund, access to broadband services and investments in health equity.

We also support significant investments in bolstering GRTC infrastructure including benches and shelters at bus stops, investments in South Side infrastructure, and a one-time, large-scale effort to update computer systems at City Hall so that Richmond residents can have a functional government that we all deserve.

Properly utilized, these funds can help bring Richmond's efforts to fight poverty, build more affordable housing and upgrade city government to scale, with long-lasting impact.

Public schools are getting support through the plan with a separate tranche of funding, and it's equally imperative that the School Board use those dollars strategically both on immediate needs and supporting implementation of the schools' strategic plan.

Our plan deliberately leaves considerable funds uncommitted for use on priority capital projects or agency needs, such as more youth programming and longer library hours. We hope the administration and City Council work together on a list of projects prioritized by equity: for instance, finally getting the swimming pool re-opened at Calhoun Center in Gilpin Court after years of closure.

What we are opposed to, however, is simply dividing up the available dollars for district-specific projects that may not impact the city's core problems of poverty, underemployment and unaffordable housing, or to fund agency-driven wish lists that may not produce better functioning government operations.

A strong local plan to take maximum advantage of the American Rescue Plan should be just the start. Richmond's elected leaders should also be pushing the governor and the General Assembly to use the state's much larger allocation of funding through the plan, over \$4 billion, to support the larger-scale needs of the state capital, particularly in education, housing and infrastructure.

And Richmond's leaders should be asking General Assembly allies to support enabling legislation that might allow the city to undertake more creative initiatives in areas like social enterprise development and establishing child trust funds that help all public-school students build wealth.

Opportunities like the American Rescue Plan come around all too rarely. Richmond has too many severe challenges to fail to take advantage of this moment. History will not judge current leaders kindly if the strongest possible effort is not made to use these funds to catalyze lasting change. The money is there. Is there the commensurate political will to reduce poverty dramatically in Richmond by taking existing efforts to scale and making good on years of promises and pledges?

We hope, expect, and demand that the next several months reveal the answer to that question to be a resounding yes.

Teresa Caviness is a business and communications strategist working with industry-leading organizations across the country. Garrett Sawyer is an executive human relations professional and owner of Sawyer HR Consulting LLC. Thad Williamson is an associate professor of leadership studies at the University of Richmond. They are all members of the civic group Richmond Together. Visit richmondtogether.org. Opinions on the Back Page are those of the writers and not necessarily those of Style Weekly.

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https://richmond.com/opinion/columnists/garrett-sawyer-and-thad-williamson-column-city-council-should-use-the-arp-to-build-community/article_7ce51002-b0e9-539e-9f62-cdec672db4c.html

Bob Brown, Richmond Times-Dispatch; September 12, 2021

Federal Aid in Richmond

Garrett Sawyer and Thad Williamson column: City Council should use the ARP to build community health and wealth in Richmond

By Garrett Sawyer and Thad Williamson

As of Sept. 6, 53.1% of Richmond city adults were fully vaccinated against COVID-19, with 59.4% of adults having received at least one dose. That community vaccination rate placed Richmond in the midrange of Virginia independent cities.

But it still was substantially below the adult vaccination rates of neighboring Chesterfield and Henrico counties (65.0% and 68.2%, respectively). With public school starting this month, the level of vulnerability in Richmond makes it highly likely that there will be significant school-based transmission, classroom quarantines and other disruptions to our children's learning this fall.

Indeed, we should be asking ourselves why — with Richmond's enormous educational, health care and business resources, and with our status as Virginia's capital city — we aren't already doing much better?

It's tempting — but incorrect — to assume that the issue is that our public health leaders just aren't doing enough. In fact, the Richmond City Health District holds vaccination events on virtually a daily basis, in addition to sharing a wide variety of important information on its website and through other channels.

These efforts come in the context of enormous socioeconomic and racial disparities that both reflect and reinforce unequal access to health care and health resources. Those disparities largely account for the 20-year difference in life expectancy that exists between Gilpin Court and Westover Hills.

Our leadership can't wipe away all those factors overnight, but it can and should aim higher. More intensive and targeted outreach and communication to Black and Brown communities is an urgent need. In fact, we believe that Richmond soon will have both the opportunity and the means to set and achieve a bold goal of at least 80% adult vaccination by the end of the year.

This month, City Council will begin discussions on how to spend the nearly \$155 million in assistance that will come to the city via the American Rescue Plan. That is a lot of money — \$155 million is equivalent to about a 5% boost to the city's annual revenues over the next four years — but it is not an infinite amount, and the money must be allocated strategically and wisely.

Those funds, which must be committed by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026, could enable Richmond to make great strides in addressing both the pandemic and the longer-term inequities that adversely impact health and well-being outcomes in the city.

Our organization, Richmond Together, recently released a strategic plan (available at richmondtogether.org) detailing how ARP funds should be strategically allocated among initiatives that address not just the symptoms but the root causes of racial and economic inequality in Richmond. Our research-based plan includes targeted programs in public health, workforce development, youth employment, wealth-building, housing, transportation infrastructure and more. Our recommendations include both increased investments in existing programs that already are making a substantive difference, as well as new high-potential initiatives.

To address the pandemic and long-term public health, we recommend the creation of a Health Equity Fund, to be administered by Richmond City Health District. In the near term, this fund could support enhanced vaccination efforts and other pandemic-related priorities, while in the longer term, it could enable the health district and community partners to tackle deep-seated inequities by undertaking aggressive, proactive efforts to connect residents to health, educational and employment resources.

For example, a coordinated program aimed at assuring that all children from birth to age 5 have access to regular checkups, while their parents have access to resources that would help them keep their children healthy and prepared to learn, would reduce the number of sick days from work that parents would need — and make it a bit easier for Richmond Public Schools to achieve its learning goals for those kids.

Our efforts to overcome the pandemic must be seen in the broader context of the many challenges Richmond is facing, challenges that were identified and documented a decade ago by the Mayor’s Anti-Poverty Commission. Some notable, incremental progress has been made (e.g., a decrease in the poverty rate to 19% in 2019), but it has been fragile at best, and the resources devoted to these issues have been modest relative to the scale of the challenges.

The ARP funds provide Richmond the opportunity and the means to take the leap from incremental progress to transformative breakthroughs needed to tackle both the long-standing challenges of poverty and racial inequity, and fast-arriving crises like climate change. This means taking a strategic approach that is laser-focused on the city’s most urgent needs, informed by both solid data and bold goals.

Richmond may never have a better chance to add heft and muscle to its continuing struggle to create an equitable, forward-looking community. History will not judge leaders (or citizens) kindly if we miss what could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to heal and transform our city.

Garrett Sawyer is an executive human relations professional and owner of Sawyer HR Consulting LLC.

Thad Williamson is associate professor of leadership studies at the University of Richmond and a former director of the city’s Office of Community Wealth Building.

They both are members of the civic organization Richmond Together. Contact them at: togetherrichmond@gmail.com

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