



## Richmond Public Library Board

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



### Library Board Meeting Minutes October 27, 2021

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

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Laura Drewry, Cheryl Clarke, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Jennifer Deuell, 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 October 27, 2021 Agenda as submitted:<br><i>Motion: Christine Peterson, Second by Emily Altman</i><br><br><i>AYES: <u>9</u>      NOES: <u>0</u>      ABSTAIN: <u>0</u>      Approved Unanimously.</i>   |
| <b>Consent Agenda</b>   | Approve the September 22, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes, Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted:<br><i>Motion: Christine Peterson, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i><br><br><i>AYES: <u>9</u>      NOES: <u>0</u>      ABSTAIN: <u>0</u>      Approved Unanimously.</i>  |
| <b>Public Comment Period</b>                                  | None Present  |
| <b>REPORTS</b>  |   |
| <b>Friends of the Library (FOL)</b><br><br><u>Clay Dishon</u> | Due to technology difficulties, Chair Yates read Ms. DeBoer's Friends of the Library Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• November 5: The Annual Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. The FOL is looking for new Board members as well as adding to its membership. The fall book sale will kick off immediately following the Annual meeting/7:00 p.m.</li><li>• November 5-6: The Friends will hold its fall book sale. The sale is by appointment only with 50 people per hour scheduled to enter the building at a time.</li><li>• Currently, there is no fall book drive scheduled.</li></ul> |
| <b>Library Foundation</b><br><br><u>Susan Revere</u>          | Ms. Revere reported on fundraising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Foundation applied for a grant through the CarMax Foundation and through the Network of the National Library of Medicine All of Us program.</li><li>• Next grant opportunities to pursue: Binswanger Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, and National Home Library Foundation.</li><li>• The 2021 Impact Report is scheduled to go out mid-November.</li><li>• The Annual Fund letter will go out the end of November/early December timeframe.</li></ul>   |

## REPORTS (CONTINUED)

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| <p><b>Library Foundation (Continued)</b></p> <p><u>Susan Revere</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Foundation has been awarded a \$17,000 Virginia Humanities SHARP grant. Funding for this grant has been provided by Virginia Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative. Ms. Revere recognized Chris Peterson as a catalyst and strategist for leading the effort.</li> <li>• Three Board Retreat plans are in process. The Retreat has been postponed until early spring 2022.</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Revere also reminded Board members if they are a state employee, or have friends and family who are state employees, to please consider asking them to support Richmond Public Library during the campaign: CVC Code <a href="#">201299</a>. The <i>Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign (CVC)</i> is the annual charity drive of the employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additional Information and links are available on the Foundation home page on <a href="http://rvalibrary.org">rvalibrary.org</a>.</p> |
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| <p><b>Administration</b></p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u></p> | <p><b>Highlights and Additions to Director’s Report:</b> Mr. Firestine reported on highlights and additions from the Director’s Report. He also reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a couple of frozen positions. Using temporary staff to fill void. In the process of interviewing some critical positions.</li> <li>• Staff Development Day, scheduled for October 11. First part of the morning was virtual with a welcome, Branch introductions, awards, and update on state of the library. Afterwards, Branches did a Niche Academy training module on “Welcoming Libraries and Transgender Communities”. Lunch was provided. All locations opened at 2:00 p.m.</li> <li>• ReadUp! Another successful program this year.</li> <li>• Virginia Library Association (VLA) conference started on October 27. Law Librarian Meldon Jenkins-Jones will be recognized and awarded with the Librarians of Color Forum Award.</li> <li>• <i>The Surprisingly Big Business of Library E-books</i> article in the board packet is used for good background information for next month’s discussion on lobbying and legislation that surrounding states have done to ensure libraries have access to e-books. Maryland has done a law and Virginia would like to use that as a model for legislation. More information will be forthcoming to be put in with the City’s legislation packet for the 2022 General Assembly.</li> <li>• Virginia Department of Health would like the libraries to help distribute COVID test kits. In the process of working out the details.</li> <li>• Circulation statistics was noted doing better this year. People have discovered E-content during the pandemic and it continues to grow.</li> </ul> |
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## BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

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| <p><b>Chair</b></p> <p><u>William Yates</u></p>                                     | <p>No formal report.</p> <p>Chair Yates mentioned due to staffing concerns last month, it was good to see that some of the staffing issues were resolved. He also wanted to compliment library staff working on teams to cover Branches closes to each other when needed. Everyone is doing a great job.</p>  |
| <p><b>Finance Chair</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u><br/><u>Scott Firestine</u></p> | <p>Mr. Firestine reported there are going to be changes in the budget process this year. The City will no longer use a 0-base budget strategy and do more performance-based budgeting. Secondly, snapshot of filled funded positions in January will stop. In the FY23 Budget current vacant positions that are not funded will need justification to fill. Once positions are added to the budget, those positions stays in the budget. These two changes are significant and will help streamline the process and put more emphasis on performance, activities, and strategies.</p> |

**BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

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| <b>Facilities Chair</b><br><br><b><u>Janet Woody</u></b><br><b><u>Gail Zwirner</u></b><br><b><u>Scott Firestine</u></b> | <b><u>Main Library Master Plan:</u></b> Ms. Woody reported the feedback from the architects was not what was hoped for with the needs that were presented. The Committee met on October 5 without the architects. The discussion was to let the architects know where they were lacking. The Committee met the architects on October 18. The architects started to show some improvements, but still being timid on their approach and presentation. Once the architects left the meeting, the Committee stayed and focused on what they wanted for the Master Plan. Mr. Firestine presented the architects with the results from that discussion. The Committee and architects will meet again on October 27 to go over the list. |
| <b>Governance Chair</b><br><b><u>Emily Altman</u></b>   | No formal report.  |

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- The Draft 2022-2027 Strategic Plan was tabled to be presented at the December 1, 2021 Meeting.
- Main Master Plan ongoing discussions.
- Discussion on lobbying and legislation that surrounding states have done to ensure libraries have access to e-books. Virginia wants to follow Maryland's law as a model to use for legislation. Information will be put in with the City's legislation packet for the 2022 General Assembly.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Vice Chair Peterson discussed advocacy for the Library. On December 1, Board Members will allocate 15-30 minutes of the meeting to work out a plan for advocating for the library. Vice Chair Peterson will take the lead and prepare the notes for the January 2022 meeting. The specific plan will give directives to the Library Director, create ideas to move forward, and add a timeline to the calendar to complete.

Vice Chair Peterson challenged Mr. Firestine to give Board Members success stories from each Branch location. Board Members will share these success stories when meeting with Councilmembers.

Vice Chair Peterson will send Ms. Pack a webcast link to distribute to Board Members. The Foundation Center is doing a webcast on nonprofit advocacy.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m. by unanimous consensus from the members that were present in the meeting.

There is no meeting in November. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, for a Regular Monthly Meeting at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Approved:   
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP  
Senior Executive Assistant