



**Richmond Public Library  
Library Board of Trustees**

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



**Library Board Meeting Minutes  
May 25, 2022**

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

**ABSENT:** Chair William Yates, Garrett Sawyer, Attorney Laura Drewry, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer, Foundation Susan Revere, Cheryl Clarke

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Gianna Pack, Phil Shephard

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Vice Chair Christine Peterson at 11:49am at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia. The public was noticed and could attend in person or by viewing the Richmond Public Library YouTube channel <https://bit.ly/2VfKL9U>, where it was live streamed. A quorum was established.

<b>Agenda</b>	Approve the May 25, 2022, Agenda as submitted: <i>Motion: Janet Woody, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i>  <i>AYES: <u>7</u>    NOES: <u>0</u>    ABSTAIN: <u>0</u>    Approved Unanimously.</i>
<b>Consent Agenda</b>	Approve the April 27, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Gail Zwirner, Second by Barbara Burton</i>  <i>AYES: <u>7</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>  <u>Clay Dishon</u> <u>Ruth DeBoer</u>	Mr. Dishon reported on the Friends of the Library Report in Ms. DeBoer's absence:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 4 at 10AM to 4PM: The Friends will hold a \$10 a Bag Book Sale. They still need a few volunteers for the afternoon. If you know of anyone interested in volunteering, please email your information to Ruth DeBoer and she will forward the information to the Book Sale Chair Paige Newman. If you know Paige and have her contact information, feel free to contact her directly.</li> <li>• The Friends are looking for new Board members. They have some good candidates, but are still in need of people who are interested in helping with their fundraising, Public Relations and social media, membership promotions, and various other projects that come up.</li> </ul>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Friends of the Library (FOL) (Continued)</b></p> <p><u>Clay Dishon</u> <u>Ruth DeBoer</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Friends are looking to connect with a facilitator for revitalizing their Board. They know what their mission is, so they are not looking so much for someone who can help them on the “what”, but more with the “how” to get where they want to go. If anyone on the LBOT or the Foundation knows of anyone they would like to recommend, the Friends would be glad to have another contact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Library Foundation</b></p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u> <u>Susan Revere</u></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported on the Library Foundation Report in Ms. Revere’s absence:</p> <p><b>Foundation Update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Foundation continues to seek feedback after the 3-Board Retreat held on May 7. If you have not already done so, please respond to the google form sent by Mr. Firestine.</li> <li>Anyone interested in submitting an idea or question regarding the renovation at the Main Library can visit their local library branch where posters with a QR Code and connect directly to the “Main Renovation” page on the Library website. One may submit a question or idea online, or via paper at every Branch. Please share this information with local friends and family to encourage engagement in this important process.</li> </ul> <p><b>Grant Activity/Partnership Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank you to those who attended “What Makes a Fact True: Local Journalism and American Democracy” designed by RPL Law Librarian Meldon Jenkins-Jones. Your support continues to be important to programming efforts.</li> <li>Thank you to those who attended The Urban Fiction Experience 2022 on May 21. Attendee feedback was 100% positive, with <b>Breeze the Poet</b> consistently mentioned as a program favorite.</li> <li>The Foundation will submit a grant request to the Robins Foundation to expand the impact of the Library’s highly successful RVA Reads Program. Deadline: June. Award notification: September.</li> <li>The Foundation will reach out to area district associations for grant opportunities in the coming weeks.</li> </ul>
<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 the highlights from the Director’s Report. He also reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Circulation is up and is surpassing 2019; many Branches are up over their 2019 numbers.</li> <li>In the process of completing a Non-Technical Waiver request to the State Library as part of the State Aid process. The waiver is needed if libraries see a decrease in local support like RPL did in FY2021, which was an 8% (\$400K) decrease.</li> <li>Toured with the Human Services Portfolio Leadership Team. Visited other departments and agencies that provide services to people in the City of Richmond that need assistance.</li> </ul>

**BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Chair Report**

**Christine Peterson**  
**William Yates**

Vice Chair Christine Peterson and Members present expressed appreciation and thanked Mr. Firestine and staff for all of the hard work done on the 3-Board Retreat.

Chair Yates submitted the following written report in his absence: Good morning. I'm sorry that I can't attend today's meeting. I am out of town on family business today.

Thank you all for attending the recent three board retreat. I appreciate the effort all of you make for the Richmond Public Library and I know that giving up a spring Saturday morning was a sacrifice. I hope you will agree with me that it was time well spent.

The retreat, particularly when the Master Plan was presented, did generate some interesting discussion. We had, at my table, some searching questions about the proposed renovation—focusing on need, scope, community, and funding. These are all important and legitimate areas for discussion.

In light of the discussions at the retreat, I would like to suggest the following:

First, and maybe most difficult, is for all the various board members (on the three boards) to stay calm, put aside any preconceived ideas regarding the renovation, and let the facilities committee and the Master Planning group (which includes LBOT members, Foundation Board members, and city employees) continue putting more meat on the bones of the skeleton they presented at the retreat.

Second, I'd like to offer a tour of the building to any of the board members, with a focus on seeing the various issues existing in the building as is. This will, of course, include the various problems we have with access. My belief is that it is difficult to support a major renovation if one doesn't understand the current problems and limitations of the building.

Third, I'll work with John Ulmschneider on the communication between and responsibilities of our boards. John is fully aware of the differing responsibilities of each board. Together we can work to make sure the vision LBOT has for RPL can be realized with the support of fund raising efforts by the Foundation.

Thanks again for all you do for RPL. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on June 22.

**Finance Chair**

**Scott Firestine**  
**Garrett Sawyer**

Mr. Firestine reported the extra money \$1,000,000K City Council added to the Library's budget surpassed a little where RPL was in 2019. The plans for the money will be used to:

- Restore evenings two nights a week at all Branches and four nights a week at the Main Library
- Expand morning hours
- Restore Sundays at the Broad Rock Branch Library (requested by Council)

In the process of closing out the Budget. Once decisions are made with funding positions, we will be in a position to start hiring again after July 1, 2022. The target to have staff in place is when school restarts after the summer.

Vice Chair Peterson requested Mr. Firestine to produce a one page checklist sheet to use when talking with Council Members on plans moving forward and how the money is going to be used.

<b>BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)</b>	
<b>Facilities Chair</b>  <u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Ms. Woody commented on the 3-Board Retreat. She mentioned it was very interesting and a good experience. The Facilities Committee is working on a Master Plan document. When the Master Plan document is completed, it should answer a lot of uncertain questions. There is a meeting planned for May 26 to continue working on the Master Plan document.</p> <p>Ms. Woody encouraged Board Members to go the website: <a href="https://rvalibrary.org/about/library-board/main-library-renovations/">https://rvalibrary.org/about/library-board/main-library-renovations/</a> to review questions from the community.</p> <p>On May 26 there will be a follow up meeting with the Urban Design Committee (UDC). Mr. Firestine gave a brief overview of the next steps with the UDC and what will be discussed at that meeting. The UDC wanted more information and clarification on the conceptual design since it was not a final design.</p>
<b>Governance Chair</b> <u>Emily Altman</u>	<p>Ms. Altman reported every two years the LBOT members elect its Board Leadership. The next election is due at the June 22 meeting for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. She mentioned Mr. Yates would like to run for Chair again, so he will be on the ballot. Ms. Peterson has decided she does not want to run for Vice Chair. Both positions are open for all members to consider if they choose. If interested for consideration for either position, reach out to Ms. Altman.</p> <p>Ms. Altman also mentioned this is also an opportunity if anyone is interested in switching Committees. She will pass the information onto the new Board Chair.</p>
<b>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</b>	
No Unfinished Business Discussed.	
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
<p>The Members discuss accepting and approving the Participation by Electronic Communication Means Policy as submitted.</p> <p>Approve the Participation by Electronic Communication Means Policy as submitted:  <b>Motion: Brent Graves, Second by Janet Woody</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AYES: <u>7</u>      NOES: <u>0</u>      ABSTAIN: <u>0</u>    <i>Approved Unanimously.</i></b></p>	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:14pm by unanimous consensus from the members that were present in the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, for a Regular Monthly Meeting at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

Approved: William E. Yates  
 Mr. William Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP  
 Senior Executive Assistant