



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
April 26, 2023

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

ABSENT: Brent Graves, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer, Gianna Pack

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Cheryl Clarke, Susan Revere, Phil Shephard, Attorney Shannon Fitzgerald, Attorney Laura Drewry, Ben Himmelfarb, Charles Schmidt

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair William Yates at 11:45am at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. The meeting was noticed and the public 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.

Agenda	Approve the April 26, 2023, Agenda. <i>Motion: Gail Zwirner, Second by Sharon Carter-Gunter</i> AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.
Consent Agenda	Approve the March 22, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Sheron Carter-Gunter, Second by Garrett Sawyer</i> AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.
Public Comment Period	None.
REPORTS	
Friends of the Library (FOL) <u>Clay Dishon</u> <u>Ruth DeBoer</u>	Mr. Dishon reported on the Friends of the Library Operations in Ms. DeBoer’s absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Friends raised over \$14,000 during the April Book Sale • May 3: Friends Board Meeting – Main Library • May 5-6: Half Price Book Sale – \$2 a bag for teachers and \$5 a bag for members • RPL is reclaiming additional space in the Book Sale area once the sale is over – Work in progress • Recruiting membership – Ongoing • The Law Library area and Richmond Room – Work in Progress

REPORTS (CONTINUED)

<p>Library Foundation</p> <p><u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Ms. Revere reported on the Library Foundation Operations:</p> <p>Foundation Update:</p> <p>Ms. Revere thanked everyone who attended the Maya Smart events on May 25. Ghazala Hashmi, Betsy Carr, and Maryn Campbell from the Honorable Jennifer McClellan’s office joined over 60 civic and community leaders, board members, library staff, Friends, and Foundation members for breakfast.</p> <p>Jennifer Deuell and Ms. Smart hosted Book Babies and Toddler Time. Ms. Smart was interviewed at the Main Library in the teen space by Mike King with Radio One.</p> <p>Forty-four donors attended the donor reception, and approximately 150 community members attended the evening session from 7-8pm, including Michael Paul Williams’s whose November editorial sparked the idea for having the event.</p> <p>Comments heard were positive and recognize the library is a place for this type of conversation and effort. Listed is an excerpt of a comment shared by a Board member this morning:</p> <p><i>“I’m so glad I went. I invited our grandson’s mother in hopes that she would go, which she did. She said she really enjoyed it and learned a lot. I can get overwhelmed sometimes thinking about all the problems in the world and whether we are making a difference. I remind myself of the starfish story which I’ll have to share with you sometime. I was really encouraged that there was an event last night for people who wanted to learn more about giving their kids the best chance at life. I could feel the goodness in the room.”</i></p> <p>Grant Activity/Partnership Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virginia Credit Union, Towne Bank, and the Friends all supported library programs and this event• Grants have been submitted to the Allan and Margot Blank Foundation in support of the Gellman Room Concert Series 50th season this fall, and to both the George J. and Effie L. Seay Foundation (Bank of America) and Richard and Caroline Gwathmey Memorial Trust in support of early childhood learning programs• Grant submissions are in development to the REB Foundation, Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation, and the Universal Leaf Foundation
<p>Administration</p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Director’s Report: In addition to the items submitted on the Director’s Report in the Board Packet, Mr. Firestine reported on the following:</p> <p>Mr. Firestine shared on the successful Maya Smart events of the day. He also shared on Ms. Smart’s book and her journey. The LBOT discussed the importance having this event on early literacy.</p> <p>Mr. Firestine shared the amazing achievements of Lynn Vandenesse, who is a 50 year employee now retiring. There was a reception and opportunity to meet Ms. Vandenesse’s family recognizing her achievements. Ms. Vandenesse was responsible for Gellman Concert Series for about 40+ years. She also coordinated and led the artwork efforts throughout the building as well as hosting First Fridays.</p>

REPORTS (CONTINUED)	
Administration (Continued) <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Library Week – Started April 23-29 with this year with this year’s theme <i>There’s More to the Story</i>. There are activities planned, Ripple will visit all the branches, and giveaways to visitors • Senior Librarian Charles Schmidt of the new and improved Business, Legal, History area introduced himself to the members • Mr. Dishon gave a brief North Avenue Branch Library update. Target date to reopen is May 30, if possible, sooner. The urgency is to open before school is out for the summer • Ms. Zwirner read the Senate of Virginia Resolution for presentation to Richmond Public Library as an expression of the General Assembly’s Admiration for the institution’s history and its contributions to the Commonwealth celebrating its 100th Anniversary.
Advocacy Task Force <u>Sharon Carter-Gunter</u> <u>Garrett Sawyer</u>	<p>Mr. Sawyer reported on attending the Maya Smart events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things are shaping up for the Library, which was listed in the proposed Budget. There is still more opportunity to send emails and staying in contact with the LBOT respective Councilmembers and school representative; keeping them updated on the Library’s activities • In the coming weeks, Mr. Sawyer will send Ms. Pack a communication and handouts to be distributed among the LBOT
Early Literacy Update <u>Christine Peterson</u>	<p>Ms. Peterson updated on Early Literacy activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week of May 8 – Planned meeting to discuss evaluation criteria on new and expanding programs. There is a need to start measuring these programs so not to lose the opportunity to provide data when seeking funding and learning what could be done better
BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Chair Report <u>William Yates</u>	<p>No formal report.</p> <p>Chair Yates recognized Laura Drewry as she moves into the new position of the City Attorney and leaving the LBOT after 15 years of dedicated service. City Attorney Drewry introduced the LBOT’s new Attorney Shannon Fitzgerald.</p>
Finance Chair <u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Chair Yates commended Mr. Firestine and staff for all of the hard work put into the statistics and bouncing back from the pandemic as well as continue to grow consistently. The E-Content’s growth is impressive this year over last year.</p> <p>Chair Yates expressed concern over the \$415,693 deficit in the Special Fund Expenditures 00309-Public Law Library account. Mr. Firestine reported the deficit is catch-ups from previous years, but does not know where it started, plus expenses continue to grow. He also mentioned West Law going from hard back materials to on-line access, which is less expensive and can be accessed at all branches.</p> <p>Council introduced the Budget and will be voted to adopt on May 8. The increase was about \$1.2M restoring RPL to pre-pandemic budget. This funding will support expanded public service hours, increased books and materials, 8% wage increase for City staff, and \$18.00 minimum starting wage for all new City hires in FY24.</p>

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)	
Facilities Chair <u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Ms. Woody reported it was time to talk about the Branches. There should be a standard of items of what a Richmond Public Library should have. The LBOT discussed starting a Master Plan on the Branches with guiding principles. A meeting will be coordinated to discuss further.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)	
Governance Chair <u>Emily Altman</u>	No formal report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No Unfinished Business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

No New Business discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:03pm by unanimous consensus from the members that were present in the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, for a Regular Monthly Meeting at the Westover Hills Branch Library located at 1408 Westover Hills Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia 23225.

Approved: 
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*
Senior Executive Assistant