



**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 24, 2023**

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

**ABSENT:** Garrett Sawyer, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Cheryl Clarke, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Phil Shephard, Hayley DeRoche

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 Westover Hills Branch Library located at 1408 Westover Hills Boulevard, Richmond, Virginia 23225. The meeting was posted 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.

<b>Agenda</b>	Approve the May 24, 2023, Agenda. <i>Motion: Sheron Carter-Gunter, Second by Gail Zwirner</i>  <i>AYES: 7 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 Approved Unanimously.</i>  Ms. Altman was not present for the vote.
<b>Consent Agenda</b>	Approve the April 26, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Chris Peterson, Second by Barbara Burton</i>  <i>AYES: 7 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 Approved Unanimously.</i>  Ms. Altman was not present for the vote.
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	None.
<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 Operations in Ms. DeBoer’s absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Big Spring Book Sale brought in approximately \$13,000.</li> <li>• May 5-6: Successful quick 1/2 Price and Bag Sale brought in around \$1,500.</li> <li>• Friends are working to clear the front area of the mezzanine at the Main Library, which was requested by RPL for library Tech Services operations – Ongoing.</li> <li>• Working to organize how the Friends can hold the two big book sales each year in the auditorium as an option – In process.</li> <li>• RPL Administration has offered corner space in the Main Library Reading Room for the Friends to have a larger and visual presence for daily book sales. The Friends are working on what will need to be purchased by them for the space and what the layout will need to be – In process.</li> </ul>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Library Foundation</b></p> <p><u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Ms. Revere reported on the Library Foundation Operations:</p> <p><b>Grant Activity/Partnership Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Library has been awarded a Fan District Association grant in support of system-wide Summer Programs in 2023 and 2024.</li><li>• The Library has been awarded The Welcoming Library Collection through the Library of Virginia. A Welcoming Library is a pop-up conversation on immigration using a traveling collection, and can travel between schools, libraries, and community centers in each region, building an environment of welcoming and belonging.</li><li>• Additional grants in process include the Mellon Foundation, Memorial Foundation for Children, REB Foundation, and Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation.</li></ul> <p>Ms. Burton commented that today was the last day for the RVA Reads Program in the preschools. She thanked Ms. Revere for her hard work with pursuing that grant. It brought much joy to the children when they saw the volunteers for RVA Reads come to the school; they know that they will be receiving a new book to take home. The program will start up again in October 2023. Ms. Burton encouraged other LBOT to give a day to volunteer and read to the children. It is very rewarding.</p>
<p><b>Administration</b></p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p><b>Director’s Report:</b> 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 announced North Avenue Branch Library is open as of May 22, 2023. He expressed his gratitude to all the staff that helped out to get the Branch up and running again.</p> <p>The 8th Annual Urban Fiction Event took place on May 20 at the Hull Street Branch Library this year. It was another successful year with over 200 people attending throughout the day.</p> <p>Referencing the April 26 meeting program statistics, Mr. Firestine mentioned the report was incorrect in the West End Branch Statistics of 11 attendees. Ms. Pack corrected the number in the report to 211 attendees.</p> <p>There was an informal reception for Library/Community Services Manager Kerry Phillips on May 23. Ms. Phillips is retiring on May 31 with over 15 years of service as a Branch Manager at the Ginter Park Branch Library. Old friends of the Advisory Committee, members of her Book Club, and staff showed up to wish her the best.</p> <p>RPL now has a quarterly publication called <i>What’s Happening</i>. The summer 2023 edition can be found at all library locations. This publication covers programming and events throughout the summer season. Members were excited for this new resource. Mr. Firestine expressed his gratitude to the Outreach and Engagement Team for their work. Ms. Woody asked if the publication could be distributed in other locations throughout the City other than libraries. Mr. Firestine said he would look into other partners for possible distribution.</p>

<b>REPORTS (CONTINUED)</b>	
<p><b>Advocacy Task Force</b></p> <p><u><b>Sheron Carter-Gunter</b></u> <u><b>Garrett Sawyer</b></u></p>	<p>Vice Chair Carter-Gunter reported on Advocacy in Mr. Sawyer's absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Sawyer still editing the email communication. It will be out soon. The email will communicate the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maya Smart event tying into the Strategic Plan of childhood literacy.</li> <li>○ Reinforcement of the money that will be used in the FY24 Budget year – The initial funding will allow RPL to restore staffing and programming in adult and child literacy, and increase operational hours, as well as expressing appreciation for those funds.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Vice Chair Carter-Gunter encouraged all LBOT to visit a neighborhood library and take a picture with staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Literacy Update</b></p> <p><u><b>Christine Peterson</b></u></p>	<p>Ms. Peterson updated on Early Literacy activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Peterson reported going to the Maya Smart Event and mentioned it was an exceptional event. She also expressed her gratitude to the Foundation and the staff who helped with the event.</li> <li>• Ms. Peterson updated the LBOT on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Saturday programming – Hire summer interns in early June <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More programs than before</li> <li>○ Specialist programs such as cooking, animals, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Work with others in the space – Working with VPM, the Children's Museum, Excell, and the Richmond Public Schools to do family fares in several libraries</li> <li>○ Create new programs</li> <li>○ Not enough time to do everything <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5 year old Get Ready for Kindergarten Bootcamp – Postponed</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Evaluation/Participation feedback – In process</li> <li>• Future Vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cohort to Cohort collaboration</li> <li>○ More programming on mothers and babies</li> <li>○ Hire an Early Literacy person</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Chair Report</b></p> <p><u><b>William Yates</b></u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p>
<p><b>Finance Chair</b></p> <p><u><b>Garrett Sawyer</b></u> <u><b>Scott Firestine</b></u></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported Council introduced the Budget that was voted on May 8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More funding for more hours, more staff</li> <li>○ Starting July 1 budget increase to \$1.2M: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$18 starting wage</li> <li>○ 8% wage increase across the board to all staff</li> <li>○ Adding five FTE positions – Part-time and full-time staff to expand hours – Restorations of hours at Main, Ginter Park, and West End</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS (CONTINUED)</b>	
<p><b>Facilities Chair</b> <u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Ms. Woody reported the Facilities Committee is working with Mr. Firestine on standards for library buildings. There were discussions of creating a Guiding Principle document of needs the community is requesting at branch libraries. Eventually there needs to be Master Plan for the Branches. After the LBOT discussion, the Facilities Committee will start on the Guiding Principle document for the RPL Branches as their next project.</p> <p>Since Mr. Graves is on the Facilities Committee, he will be the Liaison of the LBOT to the City Leadership and Development groups using his expertise in construction.</p>
<p><b>Governance Chair</b> <u>Emily Altman</u></p>	<p>Ms. Altman reported on Governance activities. She announced Ms. Woody, Ms. Peterson, and herself were reappointed for a full second term. Chair Yates suggested reaching out to any of the interested people and see if they want to participate on a committee.</p> <p>Ms. Peterson suggested the Governance Committee take a look at what the standards should be when choosing future LBOT members. Examples mentioned where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a LBOT from each district</li> <li>• Ethnic Diversity</li> <li>• Skill Sets</li> </ul> <p>Ms. Altman will research the Bylaws and the City Charter to stay within the guidelines.</p> <p>Ms. Peterson made a recommendation for an onboarding process to consider; having someone talk with new members as they are appointed. Chair Yates added the LBOT can make recommendations, but the Council appoints the candidates.</p> <p>Ms. Altman encouraged the LBOT to send names of anyone they know who would be interested in serving of the board. She will reach out to them.</p>
<b>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</b>	
No Unfinished Business discussed.	
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
No New Business discussed.	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:49pm by unanimous consent from the members that were present.

The next regular meeting of the board will be held on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at the West End Branch Library located at 5420 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226.

Approved:   
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP  
Senior Executive Assistant