



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
January 24, 2024

PRESENT: Chair William Yates, Vice Chair Sheron Carter-Gunter, Barbara Burton, Emily Altman, Christine Peterson, Gail Zwirner (Virtual)

ABSENT: Brent Graves, Garrett Sawyer, Janet Woody

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer, Cheryl Clarke, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Ben Himmelfarb, Phil Shephard

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 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.

Chair Yates announced Gail Zwirner would like to attend today’s Library Board of Trustees Regular meeting via electronic means, which complies with the RPL Governance Policy 4.12. This policy is to comply with requirements of section 2.2-3708.2(C)(1) of the Code of Virginia to allow for and govern participation by one or more Library Board of Trustees in meetings by electronic communication means.

Ms. Zwirner has met the requirement of notifying the Chair in advance that she is unable to attend in person due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents her physical attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Yates called for a motion to approve Ms. Zwirner’s request to attend the meeting by electronic means from the LBOT Members present.

Motion: Christine Peterson, Second by Sharon Carter-Gunter

AYES: 5 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 Approved Unanimously.

Agenda	Approve the January 24, 2024, Agenda as amended adding a possible discussion/vote on approving Ms. Zwirner’s continued efforts on the bookmobile project under New Business. <i>Motion: Barbara Burton, Second by Emily Altman</i> AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.
Consent Agenda	Approve the December 6, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Emily Altman, Second by Sharon Carter-Gunter</i> AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.
Public Comment Period	None.

REPORTS	
<p>Friends of the Library (FOL)</p> <p><u>Clay Dishon</u> <u>Ruth DeBoer</u></p>	<p>Ms. DeBoer reported on the FOL operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 7: RPL Friends Board Meeting – Main Library. • February 17: Book Drive (9:00A-2:00P). • April 4, 5, and 6: Spring Book sale with a bag sale included. Announcement of the book sale will be going out soon. • Working with Library/Community Services Manager Ben Himmelfarb on working through the Friends personal items vs. Library items in the Collections Room and the library stacks – Ongoing.
<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: The Foundation has achieved a Platinum Seal of Transparency for 2024 on Candid/Guidestar (moving up from Gold).</p> <p>Mr. Yates also announced contributing to the Foundation in the new year shows the LBOT support.</p>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the Mellon Grant Press Release went out, there was positive interest by the public reaching out to the library wanting more information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There has been an increase in requests to use the memory lab. ○ The team also had their first logistics meeting on how to proceed in the upcoming years of the grant requirements. • Hired 18 people. • Added more operational hours going from 412 hours to 440 hours a week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Main Library and Ginter Park and West End Branch Libraries are now opened on Sundays from 1:00P-5:00P. ○ Main Library and the West End Branch Library now opened at 9:00A. • New logo has received positive feedback. The Outreach and Engagement Team is coming up with new and exciting ways to spread awareness about our new look. • Door Count was a concern, but electronic items are about an 87% increase and is moving in the right direction. Once more programs kickoff, door count will increase. • Ms. Peterson commented she was glad to see the “Things to Celebrate” from each of the Branches in the Board Report. Having this information on hand is very helpful when talking about the good happening in the library.
<p>Advocacy Task Force</p> <p>Garrett Sawyer Sheron Carter-Gunter</p>	<p>No formal report.</p>

REPORTS (CONTINUED)

Early Literacy Update
Christine Peterson

Ms. Peterson reported Library/Community Services Manager Beth Morris and Mr. Firestine are planning great things in 2024. Everything is moving well on hiring staff and receiving grants to at least double interns on Summer Reading Program. There is still a need to have interns at each of the Branches.

Programming is going well. The new undertaking is looking at children's space, not only at the Main Library, but at all the Branches.

Ms. Peterson shared she had a conversation with Cabell Foundation. They might be interested in a refresh in the children's spaces system wide.

Mr. Firestine also added staff has been hired for the Main Library and at Branches to help support what is needed to move forward successfully. Also, the Branch Library Associates who do story times were elevated to Youth Services Librarians. Those positions now require an MLS and are expected to do more in that capacity.

Chair Report
William Yates

Mr. Yates reported and commented on the following:

- **Early Literacy:** Had a great year in 2023. It is set up to be a better year in 2024 and moving forward, which also has increased awareness and image of the library.
- **Advocacy:** There is a need to look and see what needs to be done in the next 6-8 weeks, with the Operating Budget being the primary advocacy for this coming year.
- **Main Renovations:** Continue to do everything possible to keep that moving and in the sightline for discussion. Some challenges may halt discussions such as it being an election year and the recent publicity about the John Marshall Building and the effect that may have on Capital budgeting for the moment. Efforts are much better focused on getting more in the Operating Budget. Mr. Yates stated this needs to be a priority and done quickly.

Finance Chair
Garrett Sawyer
Scott Firestine

Mr. Firestine reported the City is bumping back the introduction of the Budget from March 6 to the end of March, which will give the Mayor an extra 30 days until he introduces his budget.

Mayor Stoney will give the City of Richmond 2024 State of the City address on January 30, 2024, at 6:00p.m. at the Science Museum of Virginia.

Mr. Firestine has been working very hard with the Budget Department on the impact of the new hires and moving forward. Currently, we are a bit behind in our budget depicting at about 40% used. It should be closer to 50% at this time. It is mostly attributing to the hiring lag of getting new people in place. It is estimated to be on target by the end of the year. The Operations part of the budget is looking good.

REPORTS (CONTINUED)

Facilities Chair

Janet Woody
Gail Zwirner
Scott Firestine

Ms. Zwirner reported the subcommittee met in December and learned about Library/Community Services Manager (Outreach and Engagement) Jenn Deuell’s extensive research regarding bookmobiles. Ms. Deuell met with Henrico bookmobile librarians, contacted 2 jurisdictions in California with e-vehicles, and participated in a forum with 14 “Rocky Mountain” libraries.

Common Issues:

- Accommodating the mission in the build-out of the vehicle. Henrico, for example has multiple vehicles — STEM vs. a general “wanderer”.
- It is worth the time to over-think the build-out. Lighting, shelving, and seating are all important details.
- Determine whether City fleet services or an independent group will handle maintenance/repair.
- The size of the vehicle may determine the type of license of the person driving.
- Create a schedule considering it may take 1-2 hours to stock the vehicle.
- Get feedback from other jurisdictions about month-to-month costs.

Richmond’s goal will be to focus on the Strategic Plan issues of Early Childhood Literacy and attention to underserved communities. Services could also include book delivery/return, wi-fi, homework help, and job assistance.

Ms. Zwirner contacted Maryn Campbell in Jennifer McClellan’s Richmond office to confirm that the grant guidelines have not yet been issued for 2025 and that we are on the distribution list.

Ms. Peterson asked whether or not additional funding sources (other than federal) should be included in the language of a motion. Ms. Zwirner feels it does not need to be just a federal initiative. Her goal is to move forward with the federal approach because of the connection with Donald McEachin and for RPL to honor him through that kind of grant.

Chair Yates added that the LBOT is committed to doing this only if proper funding is identified. In other words, that no other programs will be cut to pursue those funds. Also, Ms. Zwirner be the lead on both the federal initiative and research with staff on the bookmobile project.

After giving the report, Chair Yates moved the discussion and possible motion voting under New Business.

Governance Chair

Emily Altman

Ms. Altman reported Ms. Barbara Burton’s final term will end on June 30, 2024. Recruitment will start for one position on the LBOT. There are three other positions that are coming up for reappointment. The Clerk’s Office will be reaching out to those individuals soon. Ms. Altman also mentioned if anyone was not interested in reappointment, to give her a heads up.

Ms. Altman proposed to have a discussion on criteria for future recruiting. Chair Yates recommended to have a discussion at the next meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Yates opened New Business to discuss Ms. Zwirner’s request to provide a motion to move forward on the bookmobile project. Ms. Peterson suggested a draft motion to read as “The LBOT wishes to pursue a Bookmobile Program and sources of funding for that bookmobile including federal sources with Ms. Zwirner taking the lead to move forward.”

Mr. Firestine wanted to be clear this is going to be a commitment to start a new program. The purchase of this vehicle and this activity is going to be added to our outreach services. It was stressed that multiple layers of support will be needed to sustain this type of service.

After extensive conversation, it was recommended a draft of a motion be presented for consideration at the next meeting on February 28, 2024.

Chair Yates called for a motion to request Executive Assistant Ms. Pack to work with Ms. Zwirner on drafting a motion to propose the bookmobile for the Federal Community Project Funding Grant, which will be dedicated in the memory of the late Congressman Donald McEachin, who was a Richmond Public Library supporter and bring the motion for consideration to the February 28 meeting.

Motion: Christine Peterson, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter

AYES: 6 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 Approved Unanimously.

Final Comments:

Ms. Carter-Gunter shared her thoughts on future advertising, especially on the Southside of Richmond. She suggested partnering with South Richmond News, Church Hill electronic newsletters, different community newsletters, and during planned events.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35P by unanimous consent from the members that were present.

The next meeting of the LBOT will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at the Broad Rock Branch Library located at 4820 Old Warwick Road, Richmond, Virginia 23224.

Approved: 
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP
Senior Executive Assistant