



**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**  
**March 27, 2024**

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

**ABSENT:** Emily Altman

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

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair William Yates at 11:47AM at the East End Branch Library located at 1200 North 25th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23223. 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 Garrett Sawyer 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.

Mr. Sawyer has met the requirement of notifying the Chair in advance that he is unable to attend in person due to a personal matter with his outside employment in the DC area that prevents his physical attendance at the meeting.

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

***Motion: Gail Zwirner, Second by Sharon Carter-Gunter***

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

***Ms. Peterson was not present for the vote.***

<b>Agenda</b>	Approve the March 27, 2024, Agenda as submitted. <i><b>Motion: Sheron Carter-Gunter, Second by Garrett Sawyer</b></i>  <i><b>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</b></i>  <i><b>Ms. Peterson was not present for the vote.</b></i>
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<b>Consent Agenda</b>	Approve the February 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Barbara Burton, Second by Janet Woody</i>  <b>AYES: <u>8</u>    NOES: <u>0</u>    ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</b>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	None
<b>REPORTS</b>	
<b>Friends of the Library (FOL)</b>  <u>Ruth DeBoer</u>	Ms. DeBoer reported on the Friends of the Library (FOL) operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LBOT were given a copy of the FOL updated amended Bylaws dated March 2018.</li> <li>• Book Sale reminder: April 5-7, 2024. The FOL is looking for volunteers.</li> <li>• In the process of interviewing for board member positions.</li> </ul>
<b>Library Foundation</b>  <u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Ms. Revere reported on the Foundation operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Foundation is exploring funding to support programs and performers, summer interns, and more.</li> <li>• Grants: Multiple submissions for March and April are focused on early childhood learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Administration</b>  <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring efforts continue, especially in the Youth Services Department. A new Childhood and Early Literacy Librarian, Kathleen Heslop and Young Adults Librarian, Genevieve Gray were hired.</li> <li>• Internal personnel action: Library/Community Services Manager Hayley DeRoche was reassigned to the Belmont Branch Library to replace Barbara Booth who retired in December 2023. Danielle Tarullo was hired as the new Library/Community Services Manager at Westover Hills Branch Library.</li> <li>• Additional services hours are in effect: Systemwide the library provides 511 hours weekly. The East End Branch, West End Branch and Main Library have added early morning hours by opening at 9:00 AM.</li> <li>• A handout of events occurring during National Library Week, April 7-13, was distributed.</li> <li>• A handout of Number of Library Cards to the Population of the City was presented to Board members. The report represented years 2000-2023. September 2024 is library card sign up month with plans to kick off a campaign over the next year to enroll more people for library cards.</li> </ul>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Advocacy Task Force</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u></p>	<p>Mr. Sawyer reported on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor will introduce his proposed budget for FY25 on March 27.</li> <li>• City Councilmembers met on March 25 to determine the Mayor’s priorities for the outcoming fiscal year. There five top priorities are:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong Futures for Children, Adults, and Families</li> <li>2. Safe and Clean Neighborhoods</li> <li>3. Responsive, Accountable, and Innovative Government</li> <li>4. Strategic Infrastructure Investments</li> <li>5. Planned Growth, Economic Progress, and Affordable Housing</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Priority 1 of the City Budget: “Strong Futures for Children, Adults, and Families,” fits a primary library core service. When requesting a funding increase, public service hours should be expanded to 565+ hours per week (10% increase in accessibility). This effort will give RPL parity neighboring counties of Henrico and Chesterfield. Expanded hours, require addition of increased (approximately 15 FTEs) to meet operational demands.</p> <p>The next step is to create a letter being specific on the ask, which Mr. Sawyer will create and will go to City Administration, Mayor’s Office, and Councilmembers.</p>
<p><b>Early Literacy Update</b></p> <p><u>Christine Peterson</u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p>
<p><b>Chair Report</b></p> <p><u>William Yates</u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p> <p>Chair Yates suggested including a request in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget to fund a study of our branch libraries and Main Library renovations. In the interim, the Facilities Committee and Board members can begin brainstorming general branch library needs. This will provide the study consultant with valuable insights into the Board's vision for the future of our branch libraries.</p>
<p><b>Finance Chair</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p> <p>Chair Yates mentioned the Library’s Budget is starting to come back in line and on track.</p>
<p><b>Facilities Chair</b></p> <p><u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported there are three areas of the Main Library that need updating and addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Main Library floor plan issues:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Immediate need to get the Memory Lab upgraded and installed because of the Mellon Grant.</li> <li>b. Locate a Young Adult Space is needed – Past funding was received.</li> <li>c. Locate the best place for FOL sales space.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

**Facilities Chair  
(Continued)**

Janet Woody  
Gail Zwirner  
Scott Firestine

2. There is a need for a city-wide plan for existing and maybe new locations of branches to get into the CIP:
  - a. Are they the right size?
  - b. Are they in the right neighborhoods?
  - c. Do the libraries have the things we want?
  - d. Where should new libraries go if needed?
  
3. Mobile Library Program:
  - a. What is the nature/scope of the service?
  - b. What is needed for the program?
  - c. What size vehicle?

Mr. Firestine stated there needs to be an expert hired who is knowledgeable in library standards and best practices to assist in these plans.

**Governance Chair**

Emily Altman

In Ms. Altman's absence, Chair Yates reported:

- The four LBOT members who want to be considered for reappointment in June 2024 have completed their paperwork.
- Ms. Barbara Burton's second term is up on June 30, 2024, and she is not eligible for reappointment.
- June 26, 2024, Meeting: Voting for new Chair and Vice Chair and appointments to the Committees.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No Unfinished Business was discussed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Carter-Gunter suggested making a concentrated effort on more outreach to the Hispanic population. The Sacred Heart Center is a kind of hub that would be able to help direct efforts in the Southside. Hull Street Branch and Broad Rock Branch are not easily accessible up Jefferson Davis Highway. Also, Ms. Carter-Gunter suggested reaching out to the PTAs and during their meetings.

Ms. Carter-Gunter asked how the Blood Pressure Kits Program and Loaning out Laptop Program are going. Mr. Firestine gave an update that the Laptop Program is going great. The laptops are constantly being checked out. The Blood Pressure Kit Check Out Program only started the end of February. Seeing some use, but it is hopeful to pick up as there is more awareness on wellness.

Ms. Carter-Gunter inquired about censorship or if the library has received any material challenges. Mr. Firestine stated there have been no recent requests to remove any materials from the collection. He reported that our librarians know how to communicate with patrons requesting the reconsideration of materials and all are familiar with the policy.

Ms. Woody inquired where the VCU Child Care Center was located and if they would be interested in attending a story time at the library. Mr. Firestine stated they were located on Graham next to Chamberlayne. Library/Community Services Manager Craig Gill-Walker and Librarian-Youth Services Richard Wissmiller are currently in the process of coordinating a visit with that center.

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

The next meeting of the LBOT will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at the North Avenue Branch Library located at 2901 North Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23222.

Approved:   
Mr. William Yates, Chair

*Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP  
Senior Executive Assistant*