



**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 22, 2024**

**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, Clay Dishon

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, 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 11:47AM 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.

<b>Agenda</b>	Approve the May 22, 2024, Agenda as submitted. <i>Motion Gail Zwirner, Second by Sheron Carter-Gunter</i>  <b>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</b>
<b>Consent Agenda</b>	Approve the April 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Christine Peterson, Second by Gail Zwirner</i>  <b>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</b>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	No formal Public Comment.  Ms. Altman introduced Ms. Cynthia Hinds who was referred by Councilmember Reva Trammell. Ms. Hinds is the Vice President of the Broad Rock Branch Library Advisory Board. She was present to observe the LBOT meeting as a potential applicant considering applying for Ms. Burton’s seat as she completes her tenure at the end of June.  Ms. Hinds thanked the LBOT for having the opportunity to attend and observe one of their meetings. She mentioned she was really excited about the extended library hours.

**REPORTS**

<p>Friends of the Library (FOL)</p> <p><b><u>Ruth DeBoer</u></b> <b><u>Scott Firestine</u></b></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported on the Friends of the Library (FOL) operations in Ms. DeBoer's absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends have started removing the unsold FRPL Special Collections Sale books from the old stacks. It has been a slow process, but they are making progress.</li> <li>• June 5, 6:00 PM: Full Board Meeting at the Main Library. There will be a vote on two potential new Board members. Also, there is a potential for two more candidates to be interviewed in June.</li> <li>• Materials on the mezzanine have been mostly cleaned up since the sale, but the process of reorganizing is still ongoing.</li> <li>• Received RPL's request for the Friends funding for the year and may be able to provide some extra funds after Friends expenses are accounted for in this budget cycle.</li> </ul>
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<p>Library Foundation</p> <p><b><u>Susan Revere</u></b> <b><u>Scott Firestine</u></b></p>	<p>No formal report.</p>
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<p>Administration</p> <p><b><u>Scott Firestine</u></b></p>	<p><b>Director's Report:</b> In addition to the items submitted in this month's report, Mr. Firestine reported on the following:</p> <p>Mr. Firestine thanked the Foundation for funding 10 Summer Reading Program Interns this year that will add greater capacity to what can be done during the summer. Although the June 1 hiring deadline was not met, the interns will work from June 17 – August 9.</p> <p>Mr. Firestine pointed out that circulation is on track to eclipse last year. By April of this year, we were approaching last year's totals. Chair Yates added that Belmont jumped up into second place amongst the branches. Mr. Firestine also mentioned the door count has surpassed last year's totals.</p> <p>At the request of Ms. Woody, Mr. Firestine gave a brief overview of the Overflow Project, which is relocating portions of the collections from the branches to the Main Library. It has been determined that books that have not been circulating since 2019-2021 are being pulled and relocated to the mezzanine to be kept in reserve where they will remain accessible.</p> <p>The catalog lists these books as "Mezzanine" for the location. The premise of the overflow project is using the 80/20 rule: removing 20% of the collection from the shelves in theory should improve circulation by 80%. Also noted that once an item is placed on hold and checked out by a branch it will not go back to the overflow area. It is still too early in the project to obtain stats on if it is working or not but will circle back.</p>
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**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

**Advocacy Task Force**

No formal report.

**Garrett Sawyer**  
**Sheron Carter-Gunter**

Chair Yates mentioned advocacy efforts are in a holding pattern at the moment. He encouraged members when being out at any local events, run into their respective Councilmembers, or go to any district meetings this summer, to talk up the library and the many things going on in the library, what is new, etc., but not ask for more money right now.

**Early Literacy Update**

**Christine Peterson**

Ms. Peterson reported this would be the last Early Literacy Update moving forward because the Board has done a great job in less than two years of supporting all the library's activities and have been very strategic with early literacy. Ms. Peterson summarized what was done and how it was funded throughout the process:

- **Last Year:** Saturday Programing in four of the branches every other week.  
**This Year:** All branches will have Saturday Programming with some branches every week and some branches every other week.
- **Last Year:** Youth Services Team decided when a performer was brought in to do a program, they would be in all the branches.  
**This Year:** Performers at all branches continues.
- **Last Year:** Kindergarten Readiness Program with major players working together (ExCELL, CMoR, Thrive Birth to Five, and VPM). This did not accomplish at all our expectations when doing six sessions.  
**This Year:** Because the Kindergarten Readiness Program is so important, it was decided to make some changes, which could cause further tweaking. Those changes to the program this year included:
  - Minor changes in content were made because content was more than satisfactory.
  - Major changes were made in ways we reach out to get people to attend the sessions.
  - Significant changes were made in locations of the sessions and the number of sessions were reduced from six to three.
- **Last Year:** Summer Reading Intern Pilot Program through the City – Two paid interns. The interns had a spectacular time, enriching their academic experience, and every branch library wanted to have an intern.  
**This Year:** There will be 10 interns, starting on June 17 to support all branches and the Main Library.

**Funding:** Ms. Peterson acknowledge RPL Grant Writer Susan Revere for her efforts in securing the funding of the 10 interns for this year. There are three foundations currently funding a good half of the interns and portions of the program. Two of those foundations were brand new to us and the third foundation has not funded us since 2016.

Currently, there are four grants outstanding totaling \$83K, which responses should come in early to mid-June. With the success and interest of the intern program, we should be able to secure more funding opportunities. Ms. Revere is also in the process of securing funding for upgrading children's spaces.

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Chair Report</b></p> <p><u>William Yates</u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p>
<p><b>Finance Chair</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported the city has closed out its budget. At the April meeting, Mr. Firestine distributed what the numbers would be approximately. We will not know for sure until July 1 when the city starts distributing the funds between personnel and operating. The budget will move from (when including Special Funds) \$8.6M to \$9.2M.</p> <p>Highlights of the FY25 Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ An update in Personnel expenditures – Moving from 72 FTEs to 83.5 FTEs, which is a change that was captured from this fiscal year (\$750K of budget increase).</li> <li>➤ Salary Increase for employees at 4% for all staff (\$200K of budget increase).</li> <li>➤ Technology improvements/upgrades (\$150K of budget increase).</li> </ul> <p>There was not much funding success achieved in adding positions that we needed to expand even more and increase programming.</p>
<p><b>Finance Chair (Continued)</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Through LBOT advocacy, the letter that was sent on behalf of the Board, and the successful meeting with City Administration sets us up for what we need to do in FY26. Overall, we did not get everything we wanted, but received what we need to be able to achieve our mission, be able to implement the resources we have, and continue to grow.</p> <p>Ms. Burton asked if information that was received from the meeting with City Administration will help RPL go into the next budget year. Mr. Firestine shared that the budget process starts in September. At that time the Board will begin to communicate Library needs to City Administration. It will be a continuing dialogue throughout the year and especially pertaining to capital improvements and seeking partnerships and grants to increase funding beyond City funds.</p>
<p><b>Facilities Chair</b></p> <p><u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Gail Zwirner</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Ms. Zwirner reported on the bookmobile status. She explained it was a learning process regarding Community Funding Grants. In previous meeting updates Ms. Zwirner was waiting on the guidelines because Congress had not completed the budget that could pay for the FY24 commitment, so the current guidelines were delayed then suddenly they were over.</p> <p>Ms. Zwirner shared the process, which included working with CAO Lincoln Saunders directly and then the city submits the proposal to Jennifer McClellan’s office. She then spoke with Charity Howell in Jennifer McClellan’s office who oversees this process. Ms. Howell’s role is to contact all the municipality’s CAOs to work with them directly to complete these proposals. Ms. Howell thought immediately that a bookmobile would not fit into the profile for the kind of proposals the municipality submits which include infrastructure, water issues, river-related items, etc. In summary, Ms. Zwirner shared being prepared with at least a framework proposal is vital because it will have to be fine-tuned within a few days to be submitted to the City’s CAO. Ms. Zwirner is looking into other funding options with Ms. Howell.</p> <p>The members expressed their gratitude for all the hard work Ms. Zwirner put into researching and laying the groundwork for the bookmobile project.</p>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

**Governance Chair**

Emily Altman  
Janet Woody

Ms. Altman reported on the timeline of upcoming dates and processes related to governance. The deadline for City Council to review and approve applicants to boards and commissions are quarterly. The deadline for last quarter was March 15, which was when anyone who was eligible for reappointment to a board submitted their application. The last meeting was delayed and should take place in June.

There will be one open position on the LBOT as Ms. Burton's term will end June 30. The deadline for applications is June 15. Ms. Altman will follow up with Boards and Commissions right after June 15 to look at any prospective applicants and discuss them at the June 26 meeting.

Ms. Altman announced Ms. Peterson has been nominated for the Chair position and she is interested. Still looking for a Vice Chair to be nominated. Those interested in running for both Chair and Vice Chair and interested in serving on any of the Committees should contact Ms. Altman directly.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No Unfinished Business was discussed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No New Business was discussed.

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, June 26, 2024, at the West End Branch Library located at 5420 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226.

Approved: William E. Yates  
Mr. William Yates, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*  
Senior Executive Assistant