



**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**  
**September 25, 2024**

**PRESENT:** Chair Christine Peterson, Emily Altman, Brent Graves, Cynthia Hinds, Garrett Sawyer, Janet Woody, William Yates, Gail Zwirner

**ABSENT:** Vice Chair Sheron Carter-Gunter

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

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair Christine Peterson 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 Peterson introduced new LBOT member Cynthia Hinds to the meeting. Ms. Hinds stated that she was excited and is looking forward to working with the Board.

<b>Agenda</b>	Approve the September 25, 2024, Agenda as submitted. <i>Motion: William Yates, Second by Garrett Sawyer</i> <i>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>
<b>Consent Agenda</b>	Approve the July 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as submitted: <i>Motion: Garrett Sawyer, Second by Janet Woody</i> <i>AYES: <u>8</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	No Formal Public Comment.
<b>Friends of the Library (FOL)</b>  <b><u>Ruth DeBoer</u></b> <b><u>Clay Dishon</u></b>	Ms. DeBoer reported on the Friends of the Library (FOL) operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 14: Successful Book Drive</li> <li>• October 2: Friends of the Library Board Meeting at the Main Library</li> <li>• November 1, 2, and 3: Fall Book Sale. Looking for volunteers</li> <li>• November 1: Friends Annual Meeting</li> <li>• Renewal Letters are in process</li> </ul>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p>Library Foundation</p> <p><u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>No formal report.</p>
<p><b>Chair Report</b></p> <p><u>Christine Peterson</u></p>	<p>Chair Peterson announced the following LBOT changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When the LBOT meet at other library branches, the Library/Community Services Manager will give a 5-minute update of their location with additional time for questions. This is so the Board can learn more about the library branches, the people they serve, and the programs held at that respective location.</li> <li>2. Changes were made to the existing Committee listing as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o <u>Executive Committee</u>: Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Sharon Carter-Gunter, and William Yates</li> <li>o <u>Finance Committee</u>: Committee Chair William Yates, Garrett Sawyer, and Brent Graves</li> <li>o <u>Facilities Committee</u>: Committee Chair Janet Woody, Gail Zwirner, and Brent Graves</li> <li>o <u>Governance Committee</u>: Committee Chair Garrett Sawyer</li> <li>o <u>Advocacy Taskforce</u>: Christine Peterson and Sharon Carter-Gunter, Co-Leads</li> <li>o <u>Policy Taskforce</u>: Emily Altman, Lead</li> <li>o <u>Foundation Representative</u>: Janet Woody</li> <li>o <u>Friends Representative</u>: Cynthia Hinds</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Showcase different departments within the library to speak at LBOT Meetings: Members choose their top five departments for consideration.</li> <li>4. Theme: Raise the Visibility of the Library.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Administration</b></p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u></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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September library card sign up month is going better than expected. Mr. Firestine encouraged board members to stop by Gelati Celesti to try Ripple's Choco-Lit Cherry Pie ice cream, which is a limited-edition flavor created expressly for the library.</li> <li>• October 13, 2:00PM, Main Library – Read-Up Richmond featuring Dolen Perkins-Valdez and Linda Janet Holmes in conversation.</li> <li>• Library/Community Services Manager Ben Himmelfarb gave a 5-minute update on the upgrades in the auditorium and the activity meeting room, and the events of the Main Library followed by 5-minutes of questions from members.</li> </ul>

**REPORTS (CONTINUED)**

<p><b>Advocacy Task Force</b></p> <p><u>Christine Peterson</u> <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u></p>	<p>Chair Peterson reported on advocacy activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Chair Peterson introduced herself and talked about what a fabulous organization the library is to Councilmembers running unopposed, which are the second and forth districts, as well as with the fifth district. Conversations with Council candidates Katherine Jordan and Sarah Abubaker have gone well.</li><li>2. September 9: Attended the Council Meeting and gave a short talk on how we appreciated the budgetary increases two years ago and how that money allowed us to extend operational hours and be well staffed during Public Comment. Chair Peterson received positive feedback.</li></ol> <p>The Advocacy Team is going to develop a plan like last year of the responsibilities of the members and when it needs to get done. Once completed, the Team will report back for implementation.</p>
<p><b>Policy Taskforce</b></p> <p><u>Emily Altman</u></p>	<p>No Formal Report.</p>
<p><b>Finance Chair</b></p> <p><u>Bill Yates</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Mr. Yates mentioned the changes going on this year with the budget process. The city has shifted the schedule to an earlier submission. Mr. Firestine must submit the proposed budget before October 18 instead of late fall/early winter. All city departments have been given some strictures as to what they can even ask for in the budget. Mr. Firestine and Mr. Yates will meet prior to October 18.</p> <p>Mr. Yates invited members to reach out to him if they had any questions when reviewing the Financial and/or Statistical Reports.</p>
<p><b>Facilities Chair</b></p> <p><u>Janet Woody</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Ms. Woody reported the Committee’s goal is to have a Facilities Report by the end of 2024 and have something ready for the new Council when they come on board. There is a survey being distributed with an aim to collect as much information from users of the library as well as non-users. The report will also include data about each library site.</p> <p>Mr. Firestine added the report will be broken into three parts which will include an assessment of our current conditions, feedback from our users, and a data assessment. The report will become a living document and kept up to date.</p> <p>Timeline: Surveys go out in early October, focus groups will start in October/November timeframe, and have a draft report completed by the end of the 2024.</p> <p>Mr. Sawyer added he now chairs the vacant property committee for the Richmond Public School (RPS) Board. His priority is looking at the RPS process and current school owned vacant properties.</p>
<p><b>Governance Chair</b></p> <p><u>Garrett Sawyer</u></p>	<p>No Formal Report.</p>

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No Unfinished Business was discussed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

No New Business was discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:36PM by unanimous consent from the members that were present.

The next meeting of the LBOT will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at the Hull Street Branch Library located at 1400 Hull Street, Richmond, Virginia 23224.

Approved:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Peterson, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*  
Senior Executive Assistant