



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 22, 2025

PRESENT: Chair Christine Peterson, Vice Chair Sheron Carter-Gunter, Emily Altman, Brent Graves, Garrett Sawyer, William Yates, Gail Zwirner

ABSENT: Cynthia Hinds, Janet Woody, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Cheryl Clarke, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Jennifer Deuell, Phil Shephard, Heather Montgomery

Meeting of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) was called to order by Chair Christine Peterson at 11:47 a.m. 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.

Agenda	Approve the January 22, 2025, Agenda as submitted. <i>Motion: William Yates, Second by Gail Zwirner</i> <i>AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> <i>Mr. Sawyer was not present for the vote.</i>
Consent Agenda	Approve the December 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report with the following amendments: 1. Add Heather Montgomery as a staff member in attendance in the meeting minutes. 2. Correct the Circulation Total on Page 10 of the Board Packet: a. For October 2024 (FY25), change the figure from 4,050 to 94,050. b. For November 2024 (FY25), change 9,204 to 89,204. c. These corrections will be reflected in March Board Packet. <i>Motion: Emily Altman, Second by Gail Zwirner</i> <i>AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> <i>Mr. Sawyer was not present for the vote.</i>
Public Comment Period	None present.
Reports	
Friends of the Library (FOL) <u>Ruth DeBoer</u> <u>Clay Dishon</u>	Mr. Dishon reported in Ms. DeBoer's absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Friends have voted to move the Spring Book Sale to the first weekend of May (2nd – 4th).• The Spring Book Drive will be Saturday, March 1st.

Reports (Continued)	
Library Foundation <u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Ms. Revere expressed her gratitude to everyone who contributed to the Foundation's Annual Appeal, highlighting how their support truly makes a meaningful difference.</p> <p>Grants Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Foundation is incredibly grateful to the Robins Foundation for their generous \$45,000 grant, which will help fund a part-time position and provide books for the RVA Reads program. Ms. Revere asked the LBOT to take a moment to thank any board or staff members they may know at the Robins Foundation for their generous support.
Outreach and Engagement Report <u>Jennifer Deuell</u>	<p>Library/Community Services Manager Jennifer Deuell gave an overview of the what the Outreach and Engagement Department does for the library by using Library Card Sign-up Month as an example:</p> <p><u>Systemwide Collaboration:</u></p> <p>The Outreach and Engagement Team works closely with every department and location within the Richmond Public Library system. As a result, a representative from the department is involved in most RPL committees, including the Library Card Sign-Up Month Committee.</p> <p>For Library Card Sign-Up Month 2024, the Team aimed to create something fresh and exciting. This led to a partnership with Gelati Celesti and the creation of an exclusive RPL ice cream flavor.</p> <p>By planning the partnership in the Spring, the Team was able to boost the initiative's visibility by featuring Gelati Celesti in the Summer Reading Finale. Additionally, current library users were invited to participate in the selection of the new flavor and its name.</p> <p><u>Outreach:</u></p> <p>In 2024, RPL set a specific goal of registering 1,000 new library cards. Each RPL location was assigned the task of hosting five outreach events within their communities. To ensure these events could take place simultaneously across the city, outreach kits were purchased for every location. The outcome was significant—45 events were held, resulting in over 1,800 interactions. RPL not only met, but exceeded its goal, registering a total of 1,290 new cardholders.</p> <p><u>Promotion:</u></p> <p>The Team carefully designed promotional materials to align with the theme "Libraries...More Than Meets the Eye." Both print and digital graphics were created for use on flyers, posters, bookmarks, and social media posts. For the first time, a dedicated webpage for the event was also developed.</p> <p>To broaden their reach, the team created "I Got My Library Card Today" stickers, inspired by the popular "I Voted" stickers (especially relevant in the election year of 2024). Everyone who registered for a library card received a sticker, turning them into walking advertisements for the initiative. Additionally, a press release was distributed, and Gelati Celesti helped amplify the effort by hand-delivering ice cream alongside the release. This collaboration led to a feature on <i>Virginia This Morning</i> with Kristin Luehrs.</p>

Reports (Continued)	
Outreach and Engagement Report (Continued) <u>Jennifer Deuell</u>	Community Partners: <p>Gelati Celesti – Beyond creating a custom RPL ice cream flavor, Gelati Celesti provided “Free Scoop” bookmarks for individuals who registered for a library card. They also helped promote Library Card Sign-Up Month across all their communication channels.</p> <p>Richmond Public Schools (RPS) – The Team collaborated with RPS to offer library card registrations to preschool and elementary school students in both English and Spanish. Additionally, Judy Deichman and the Lit Limo visited the Main Library to film a reel for Instagram.</p> <p>New Community Contacts – Through the many pop-up events hosted throughout the community, the Team established a variety of new contacts, opening the door for future outreach opportunities.</p>
Administration <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Director’s Report: Mr. Firestine announced that Library/Community Services Manager of Belmont Hayley DeRoche was unable to attend the meeting but will be rescheduled at a later date.
Advocacy Task Force <u>Christine Peterson</u> <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u>	<p>Chair Peterson provided the following updates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Woody held a meeting and tour at the Westover Hills Branch Library with Councilmember Sarah Abubaker of the 4th Voter District. 2. The first email of the year was sent to Councilmembers regarding the library’s response to the inclement weather and water crisis. 3. Monthly communication templates to Councilmembers will continue. The structure of the communication includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. First Paragraph – Targeted and personable introduction b. Second Paragraph – Systemwide comment provided by Ms. Carter-Gunter/Chair Peterson c. Third Paragraph – Suggestions (e.g., “What can I do for you?”) d. Closing Statement <p>Ms. Carter-Gunter will send paragraphs 2 and 3 for February to Ms. Pack for distribution to members.</p>
Policy Taskforce <u>Emily Altman</u>	<p>Ms. Altman reported the review of library policies is actively underway, though no specific updates or details, are available at this time.</p>
Chair Report <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	<p>On behalf of the LBOT, Chair Peterson expressed gratitude to Mr. Firestine, the Library/Community Services Managers, and staff who assisted during the water crisis by distributing water at several library locations while the city was closed.</p> <p>Additionally, Library/Community Services Manager Heather Montgomery was on hand at the Broad Rock Branch Library to support the Spanish-speaking community.</p>

Reports (Continued)	
Finance <u>Bill Yates, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Yates reported: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracking closely to the budget. 2. Some of the variances are outside of the library's control, primarily the line items dealing with benefits and retirement, which is running higher. 3. Security is running higher than projected for FY25. 4. Determining ask for the coming year – In process. 5. Budget announcement – March 6.
Facilities <u>Janet Woody, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Ms. Zwirner reported in preparation for 2025 budget advocacy, Bill Yates asked the Facilities Committee to provide examples of how the Main Library has aging and dilapidated infrastructure, antiquated design, and fails to meet ADA standards.</p> <p>The November 2022 Master Plan stated that “significant modifications and upgrades are required.”</p> <p><u>Examples include:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate ADA Compliance: The building currently does not fully meet accessibility standards for patrons with disabilities. The overall building suffers from inappropriate lighting levels, and ventilation concerns that impact users and detract from welcoming, comfortable, and inviting library space. 2. Obsolete and Inefficient Mechanical Systems: Antiquated systems, such as heating, cooling, and electrical, are costly to maintain and operate. Furthermore, the library lacks sufficient electrical outlets to accommodate the modern needs of patrons, including access to power for laptops and mobile devices in study and work areas. 3. Recurring Flooding and Risk to Valued Collections: Stormwater periodically floods the basement, posing a significant threat to the library's irreplaceable Special Collections and Memory Lab. <p><u>Facilities Report Update:</u> Mr. Firestine reported the facilities meeting with staff is going well, but a little behind schedule due to the recent inclement weather and water crisis closings. All staff surveys should be completed by end of February. Community meetings will be in the next phase.</p>
Governance <u>Garrett Sawyer, Chair</u>	No Formal Report.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
No Unfinished Business was discussed.	
NEW BUSINESS	
No New Business was discussed.	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:27p.m. by unanimous consent from the members that were present.

The next meeting of the LBOT will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at the Broad Rock Branch Library, 4820 Old Warwick Road, Richmond, Virginia 23224.

Approved: 
Christine Peterson, Chair

Recorder: Gianna Pack, CAP
Senior Executive Assistant