



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 26, 2025

PRESENT: Chair Christine Peterson, Vice Chair Sheron Carter-Gunter, Emily Altman, Brent Graves, Cynthia Hinds, Janet Woody, William Yates

ABSENT: Garrett Sawyer, Gail Zwirner, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer, Susan Revere

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Monica Malouf, Cheryl Clarke, 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 11:45 a.m. at the East End Branch Library located at 1200 N 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.

Agenda	Approve the March 26, 2025, Agenda as Submitted. <i>Motion: Janet Woody, Second by William Yates</i> <i>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>
Consent Agenda	Approve the February 26, 2025, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as Submitted: <i>Motion: Emily Altman, Second by Janet Woody</i> <i>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>
Public Comment Period	None present.
Reports	
Friends of the Library (FOL) <u>Ruth DeBoer</u> <u>Clay Dishon</u>	Mr. Dishon provided an update on the Friends of the Library in Ms. DeBoer's absence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Friends of the Library Board is preparing for the upcoming Spring Book Sale, which will take place on May 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Volunteers will be needed, and a call for assistance will be made soon.• The Friends are exploring the possibility of hosting a local author for a presentation at their Annual Meeting in the Fall. The date will be confirmed once an author is selected.• The Friends are continuing to organize their volunteer roster. In addition to their own activities, they are also encouraging people to volunteer with the RVA Reads Program.• The next Friends of the Library Board Meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2025, at the Main Library.

Reports (Continued)	
Library Foundation <u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Mr. Firestine presented the Library Foundation Report in Ms. Revere's absence:</p> <p>During the March 5, 2025, Foundation Board Meeting, the Foundation was pleased to welcome four new board members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tori Filas, Virginia Credit Union • Dominique McKenzie, The Vectre Corporation (formerly Chief of Staff for Richmond City Council's Ninth District) • Ashley Payne, Country Club of Virginia • Deon Wright, Dominion Energy <p>These four new members will strengthen the Foundation's efforts to build deeper connections within the community. Mr. Firestine encouraged everyone to extend a warm welcome to these new members at their earliest opportunity.</p>
Administration <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>Director's Report: In addition to the items submitted in this month's report, the following updates were made:</p> <p>Stats: The stats are looking good this year. We have surpassed 2022 circulation and, on our way to eclipsing 2024 circulation. Tracking circulation numbers is significant because it shows how adding hours, staff, and programs is getting the book budget up is paying off.</p> <p>National Library Week: National Library Week is April 6-12, 2025, with this year's theme being "Drawn to the Library."</p> <p>Each day of this week in April focuses attention on libraries across the United States. Programs and information highlight the essential work that libraries do each day. This includes providing access to information, creative spaces for learning and growth, and early literacy and continuing literacy support for adults. Libraries are creative spaces for the arts and sciences, STEM centers, job assistance sites, book discussion hosts, and gathering spaces for the community as a whole. Weekly activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, April 7 – Right to Read Day: A Day for readers, advocates, and library lovers to take action to protect, defend, and celebrate the right to read. The American Library Association (ALA) kicks off National Library Week. • Tuesday, April 8 – National Library Workers Day: A Day where we recognize all library staff and their efforts on behalf of the community. • Wednesday, April 9 – National Library Outreach Day: A Day to celebrate library outreach and the dedicated library professionals who are meeting their patrons where they are with events such as Library Signup Week, Library Popup events, etc. • This year all branches of Richmond Public Library will have tips on how to support your library and a "Draw Your Dream Library" activity for all patrons.

Reports (Continued)	
Administration (Continued) <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library mascot, Ripple, will visit each location for a special storytime during the week. <p>Budget Schedule: A calendar outlining the City Council Budget review dates was distributed to members. On March 27, 2025, Mayor Avula will present the FY26 Proposed Budget during a Special Council Meeting, which will be broadcast live at 3:00 p.m.</p>
Advocacy Task Force <u>Christine Peterson</u> <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u>	<p>Chair Peterson began the report by introducing two key topics for discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Funding Cuts to IMLS: These cuts could impact the principal funding source for state libraries and RPL. While direct grants remain a possibility, the reduction in federal support presents challenges. Philosophy for Budget Season: The approach moving forward should consider: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with Administration: Foster a cooperative and supportive relationship with the administration, aiming to strengthen our partnership where possible. Sustaining Momentum: Maintain the progress being achieved, striving to avoid cuts if feasible. Prepare for Temporary Cuts: Be ready for one-time, temporary cuts, and explore opportunities for temporary increases in funding through the Foundation and Friends of the Library. Focus on Future Goals: Ms. Carter-Gunter added to continue to prioritize and work towards Library long-term objectives.
Policy Taskforce <u>Emily Altman</u>	<p>No Formal Report.</p>
Chair Report <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	<p>Chair Peterson expressed her sincere gratitude to each member of the LBOT for their increased dedication and elevated contributions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging in visits with Council Members and attending Council Meetings Contributing to policy work Supporting new and exciting developments in Governance Making valuable introductions to key individuals Collaborating with City Administration
Finance <u>Bill Yates, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<p>There is no formal report.</p> <p>Mr. Yates shared his insights on the budget and the budget process, highlighting the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The current budget is on track. There are no excess funds to trim from the Library Budget. The budget is operating with minimal overhead. <p>Mr. Yates and Mr. Firestine will collaborate with Chair Peterson to determine the optimal timing for sending out communication about the budget, following the mayor's proposed budget presentation on March 27.</p>

Reports (Continued)

Facilities

Janet Woody, Chair
Scott Firestine

Ms. Woody began the Facilities Committee Report by expressing her gratitude to staff for their dedicated efforts in gathering the necessary information to update the Facilities Master Plan systemwide.

Facilities Report Progress Update: The target completion date for the final report is June 30, 2005. This aligns with the beginning of the new fiscal year and the start of the FY2026 City Budget and CIP planning cycle.

In April, the Facilities Committee will begin distributing paper surveys and hosting community meetings at branch locations. Mr. Firestine would greatly appreciate the assistance of LBOT members Gail Zwirner and Janet Woody in these meetings, as their firsthand observations of public feedback will be invaluable.

Progress Summary:

- **Location Documentation:**
 - Current building plans for all nine locations have been located and uploaded. Interior and exterior images of all locations have also been captured.
 - A comprehensive overview of building features, including entrances, parking, and interior details, has been compiled.
- **Staff Engagement:**
 - Staff meetings have been conducted at all library locations, generating valuable feedback on needs, critiques, and aspirations.
 - Efforts are underway to increase staff participation in the online survey.
- **Survey Data:**
 - Over 400 electronic surveys have been completed.
 - Data analysis and processing for presentation and inclusion in the final report are in progress.
 - Paper surveys, available in both English and Spanish, are being prepared for distribution.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - A minimum of 18 community meetings (two per location) are scheduled for April and May, strategically planned to maximize patron participation.
- **Statistical Analysis:**
 - Data compilation and processing, including benchmarking against the 2009 report, are ongoing to ensure an accurate and up-to-date analysis.
 - Benchmarking data is being compiled through a data portal at IMLS.

Mr. Firestine provided updates on several ongoing RPL Facilities Projects:

- **Main Library:**
 - **Young Adult Area:** Furnishings and final touches have been completed, thanks to a Library Foundation grant. The expanded space has become a popular new destination for teens in Richmond.
 - **Early Learning Literacy Area:** Expected to be completed by the end of March, this area will further enhance early childhood literacy initiatives. A new Lego station has been added for interactive learning.

Reports (Continued)	
Facilities (Continued) <u>Janet Woody, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fleet Vehicle Replacement: A slightly used 2024 Ford Cargo Van, designed for deliveries with increased cargo capacity, will replace the 15-year-old vehicle that has been in daily use, particularly for circulation services. • Hull Street Branch Library and Belmont Branch Library Bio-retention Plans: The designs are progressing and are currently approximately 60% complete. • Ginter Park Branch Library Bio-retention Landscaping Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phase 1: Completed, resulting in a significant site transformation. ○ Phase 2: Scheduled to begin in May 2025, once stormwater funding from the Department of Public Utilities becomes available. This phase will include the installation of permeable pavers, stone bench seating, and shade structures on the east side of the branch.
Governance <u>Garrett Sawyer, Chair</u>	No Formal Report.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
No Unfinished Business was discussed.	
NEW BUSINESS	
No New Business was discussed.	
FINAL COMMENTS	
Ms. Sheron Carter-Gunter extended her heartfelt congratulations to Senior Librarian and Young Adult Coordinator Genevievre Gray for her insightful article in the <i>Urban Libraries Council</i> titled "Embracing the Role of Young Adult Coordinator." Through her work, Ms. Gray is not only increasing engagement but also creating new opportunities and spaces for the young adult community. Keep up the outstanding work!	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:32 p.m. by unanimous consent from the members that were present.

The next meeting of the LBOT will be held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at the North Avenue Branch Library, located at 2901 North Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23222.

Approved: _____

Christine Peterson, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*
Senior Executive Assistant