

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (LBOT)

DECEMBER 30, 2025



RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Christine Peterson, *Chair*

Sheron Carter-Gunter, *Vice Chair*

Emily Altman

Brent Graves

Antoine Green – Appointed November 2025

Cynthia Hinds

Garrett Sawyer

Janet Woody

William Yates

Gail Zwirner – Vacant May 2025

*The mission of the Richmond Public Library (RPL) is to **inform, enrich and empower** Richmond's residents: to enrich lives and expand opportunities for all citizens by promoting reading and the active use of cultural, intellectual, and information resources through a dedication to excellence and professional service.*

Special thanks to the Richmond Public Library Foundation, the Friends of the Richmond Public Library, Richmond Public Library Staff, and Public and Private Partnerships.

1. Current Members and Terms (CY2025)

Christine Peterson, Chair <i>2nd District</i> Email: christine.peterson@hotmail.com 1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027 (Reappointed) Vice Chair Term 1: 07/22/2020-07/27/2022 Chair Term 1: 07/24/2024-06/30/2026	Cynthia Hinds <i>8th District</i> Email: mislidy2@gmail.com 1st term: 09/09/2024-06/30/2028 (Appointment)
Sheron Carter-Gunter, Vice Chair <i>4th District</i> Email: sheroncg@gmail.com 1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2024-06/30/28 (Reappointment) Vice Chair term 1: 07/27/2022-06/26/2024 Vice Chair term 2: 07/24/2024-06/30/2026	Garrett Sawyer <i>4th District</i> Email: sawyerHRConsult@gmail.com 1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2024-06/30/2028 (Reappointment)
Emily Altman <i>1st District</i> Email: owens.ema@gmail.com 1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027 (Reappointed)	Janet Woody <i>4th District</i> Email: janetwoody@mail.com 1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027 (Reappointed)
Brent L. Graves <i>4th District</i> Email: Brent.L.Graves@gmail.com Replacement term: 07/27/2020-06/30/2022 1st term: 07/01/2022-06/30/2026 (Appointment)	William Yates <i>1st District</i> Email: w Yatesva@gmail.com Replacement Term: 04/10/2017-06/30/2020 1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment) 2nd term: 07/01/2024-06/30/2028 (Reappointment) Unexpired Chair Term: 09/25/2019-07/22/2020 Chair term 1: 07/22/2020-06/22/2022 Chair term 2: 07/27/2022-06/26/2024
Antione M. Green <i>5th District</i> Email: antione.green@aol.com Replacement Term: 11/10/2025-06/30/2028	

2. By-Laws of the Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees

Article I. Name

“The Public Library of the City, its branches and substations, shall be under the control and management of a board of trustees, which is hereby created to be known as the Richmond Public Library Board.” (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-36)

Article II. Membership

§ 1. The Richmond Public Library Board (hereinafter: ‘the Board’) shall consist of nine members. Of these members (9) shall be qualified voters of the City appointed by the City Council for four-year terms commencing July 1 of the year of appointment. Upon the expiration of a term of office, the member holding that office may continue to serve until a successor is appointed. (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-37)

§ 2. In the event of a vacancy on the Library Board, the City Council shall appoint a successor to serve for the remainder of the unexpired four-year term.
(*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-40)

§ 3. No Member appointed to the Board by the City Council shall serve for more than two consecutive full terms. (*Code of the City of Richmond* § 2-836)

§ 4. A Member who misses (4) consecutive regularly scheduled meetings shall be subject to removal pursuant to the procedure provided in Section 4.15 of the City Charter, or substantially similar procedure. (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 2-837)

Article III. Powers and Duties of the Board

The Richmond Public Library Board shall have the management and control of the public libraries of the City and shall have such powers and duties with respect thereto as are conferred or imposed on it by the Code of Virginia and by ordinance. (*Code of the City of Richmond*, §§ 62-43 to 62-45)

Article IV. Officers

§ 1. The officers of the Board shall consist of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and such other officers as the Board may deem necessary. (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-82)

§ 2. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall each be elected by a majority of the Board to serve for a term of two years. Such election shall be held in even-numbered years at the first regular meeting of the Board after the beginning of the City's fiscal year.

§ 3. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman prior to the conclusion of the incumbent's term, then a successor shall be elected at the next meeting following the effective date of the vacancy to complete the unexpired term.

§ 4. The Chairman shall preside at all meetings, authorize calls for any special meeting, convene meetings of the Executive Committee and undertake any other duty assigned by the Board.

§ 5. In the absence of or during the disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman.

§ 6. In the absence of or during the disability of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, the senior Member of the Board shall act as Chairman pro tem.

§ 7. "The [City] Librarian shall be ex officio secretary of the Richmond Public Library Board and shall be responsible to such Board for the custody and safekeeping of the records and proceedings of such Board and such other records as may be committed to the custody of the Librarian by the Richmond Public Library Board." (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-82) The Librarian shall also render a true and accurate account of all meetings of the Board, shall issue notices for all regular meetings, shall issue notices for special meetings upon the authorization of the Chairman, shall prepare the agenda for each called meeting of the Board in consultation with and upon the authorization of the Chairman, shall notify the appointing body of any vacancies on the Board and send copies of the minutes of all Board meetings to the City Clerk. As Secretary, the Librarian shall memorialize and index all policies of the Board.

Article V. Committees

§ 1. There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and another Member of the Board appointed by the Chairman for a one-year term. The Executive Committee shall consider matters of general interest to the Library system which are not specifically assigned to other committees and which, in the judgment of the Chairman, either do not require immediate action by the entire Board or else are of sufficient urgency as to make it impracticable to convene a meeting of the Board. However, the Executive Committee may not take any action which would be in conflict with existing Library policies.

§ 2. There shall be a Finance Committee consisting of three Members of the Board appointed by the Chairman for one-year terms. The Finance Committee will advise and assist the Librarian in reviewing the proposed annual budget of the Library, presenting the proposed budget to the Board for approval and preparing a presentation of the proposed Library budget to the City administration and the City Council.

§ 3. There shall be a Facilities Committee consisting of two Members of the Board appointed by the Chairman for one-year terms. The Facilities Committee shall assist the Librarian with the continuing assessment of the need for repairs and improvements of the Library's facilities and of the ability of those facilities to meet the needs of the community.

§ 4. The Executive Committee may establish such special committees, as it may deem necessary.

Article VI. Meetings

§ 1. A regular meeting of the Board shall be held each month at a time and a place set by the Board. The Board may dispense with the next regular meeting by the vote of a majority of the Members present at any meeting, but in no event shall there be fewer than six regular meetings in any fiscal year.

§ 2. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, or upon the written request of any Member, for the transaction of the business stated in the call for the special meeting.

§ 3. Any Member of the Board or the Secretary to the Board may have an item placed upon the agenda for a regular or special meeting.

§ 4. Written notice of meetings shall be mailed or emailed to all Members of the Board and to all members of the public who have requested such notice as least five days before the meeting, except in cases of emergency when notice by telephone or e-mail shall be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Any required written notice, which is sent to the Board shall be accompanied by the agenda of the meeting and minutes of the last regular meeting and any intervening special meetings.

Article VII. Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of five Members of the Board. (*Code of the City of Richmond*, § 62-39)

Article VIII. Order of Business of Meetings

§ 1. At every meeting of the Board, after ascertainment of a quorum, the following shall be included as regular Agenda Items and the Order of Business:

- A. Acceptance, as presented or as corrected, of the minutes of the preceding meeting
- B. Report of the Chairman
- C. Report of the Librarian
- D. Committee Reports
- E. Unfinished Business
- F. New Business
- G. Public Comments

§ 2. The order of Business may be changed by the Chairman and may be altered or suspended by vote of the majority of the Members present.

Article IX. Librarian

The Librarian shall be considered the executive agent of the Board and shall have the sole charge of the administration of the Library under the direction and review of the Board. The Librarian shall be held responsible for the care of the buildings and equipment within the guidelines of the City's existing maintenance policies, for the selection, employment and direction of the staff, for the efficiency of the Library's service to the public, and for the operation of the Library under the financial conditions set forth in the annual budget. The Librarian shall attend all meetings of the Board unless, with the agreement of the Board, the Librarian shall designate a senior Library staff member as his representative for a particular meeting.

Article X. Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws may be proposed at any regular meeting of the Board with a quorum present but shall become effective only upon approval by a vote of two-thirds of the Members at a subsequent meeting.

Adopted: January 18, 1949

Amended: October 3, 1957

Amended: May 9, 1975

Amended: January 1994

Amended: March 12, 1998

Amended: December 13, 2001

Amended: June 16, 2004

Amended: October 28, 2015

3. Attendance Record(s)

Richmond Public Library – Library Board of Trustees

	NAME	1/22/2025	2/26/2025	3/26/2025	4/23/2025	5/28/2025	6/25/2025	7/23/2025	8/1/2025	9/24/2025	10/22/2025	11/1/2025	12/3/2025	Number of Meetings Attended for CY	%
1	Peterson, Christine (Chair in July 2024)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	10	100%
2	Carter-Gunter, Sheron (Vice Chair)	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	9	90%
3	Altman, Emily	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	10	100%
4	Graves, Brent	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		X	8	80%
5	Green, Antione (Appointed November 2025)												X	1	10%
6	Hinds, Cynthia (Appointed September 2024)		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	9	90%
7	Sawyer, Garrett	X			X		X				X			4	40%
8	Yates, William (Chair Ended 06/2024)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			9	90%
9	Woody, Janet		X	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	8	80%
N/A	Zwirner, Gail (Resigned May 2025)	X	X											2	20%
	# in Attendance:	7	8	7	6	7	7	6		7	8		7		

NOTE: Yellow indicates member requesting to participate by Electronic Communication Means

4. Dates of Meetings (January 1 – December 30, 2025)



Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees

101 E. Franklin Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

O: (804) 646-4256 / F: (804) 646-7685

Library Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year of 2025 (4th Wednesdays)	
January 22, 2025 11:45 AM Main Library	July 23, 2025 11:45 AM Ginter Park Branch Library
February 26, 2025 11:45 AM Broad Rock Branch Library	August 2025 No Meeting
March 26, 2025 11:45 AM East End Branch Library	September 24, 2025 11:45 AM Main Library
April 23, 2025 11:45 AM North Avenue Branch Library	October 22, 2025 11:45 AM Hull Street Branch Library
May 28, 2025 11:45 AM Main Library	November 2025 No Meeting
June 25, 2025 11:45 AM West End Branch Library	December 3, 2025 (Combined Nov/Dec Meeting) Westover Hills Branch Library 11:45 AM

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: October 23, 2024

Dates of Meetings (January 1 – December 30, 2026)



Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees

101 E. Franklin Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

O: (804) 646-4256 / F: (804) 646-7685

Library Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule for Calendar Year of 2026 (4th Wednesdays)	
January 28, 2026 11:45 AM Main Library	July 22, 2026 11:45 AM Ginter Park Branch Library
February 25, 2026 11:45 AM Broad Rock Branch Library	August 2026 No Meeting
March 25, 2026 11:45 AM East End Branch Library	September 23, 2026 11:45 AM Main Library
April 22, 2026 11:45 AM North Avenue Branch Library	October 28, 2026 11:45 AM Hull Street Branch Library
May 27, 2026 11:45 AM Main Library	November 2026 No Meeting
June 24, 2026 11:45 AM West End Branch Library	December 2, 2026 (First Wednesday) <i>(Combined Nov/Dec Meeting)</i> Westover Hills Branch Library 11:45 AM

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: December 3, 2025

5. Expectations and Responsibilities of Boards and Commissions

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) Board of Trustees (LBOT) is a Governing Board that is legally responsible for the control and management of the library and all that happens in it. Board administrative and policy-making duties are specified in *Code*.

Trustees have a legal responsibility to successfully maintain a free, public, nonsectarian library for all residents in the library's service area.

In Representing the Interest of the Library Board of Trustees:

- Manage (and have legal authority over) the library's policies, rules, and regulations
- Control all funds
- Plan the library's future and create an action plan
- Advocate and raise funds on behalf of the library
- Accumulate reserve funds for facility enhancements, renovation, and construction
- Evaluate the library's performance regularly to ensure objectives are met
- Hire and evaluate the Library Director
- Contract for cooperative services
- Protect the library from liability
- Prosecute those who steal or damage library property

Expectations of the Library Board of Trustees:

- Respect the important role libraries play in the life of the community
- Participate in orientation
- Attend meetings regularly
- Devote the time and attention required
- Share skills on committees
- Understand the community and its needs
- Stay current on library trends and issues
- Exercise discretion and respect confidentiality outside board meetings
- Avoid conflicts of interest and put personal agendas aside when making decisions
- Actively support the implementation of board decisions
- Advocate for the library with elected officials and in the community
- Understand the trustee's role and how it differs from the role of the Library Director
- Have an open mind and respect differing viewpoints
- Respect diversity
- Advocate for equitable pay and benefits for library personnel
- Understand and respect the role of the Library Director
- Work cooperatively with other Board members
- Focus on a secure future for the library
- Participate actively in library programs and activities

6. 2025 Achievements / Priorities / Challenges:

2025 Achievements:

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) achieved significant milestones this year across community engagement, youth development, public health, and long-term capital planning. These efforts align directly with the City's goals of fostering a healthy, informed, and resilient community and strategically align with the Mayor's Action Plan.

1. Expansion of Critical Public Health Resources via Harm Reduction Vending Machines

RPL solidified its role as a key public health partner by expanding its innovative Harm Reduction Vending Machine program. A third harm reduction vending machine was successfully installed and activated at the East End Branch Library, expanding 24/7 access to vital, free resources. The Library assisted dispensing over 700 free items (including 180 doses of life-saving naloxone) in just three months from the initial two machines.

2. Successful Archival of Community History and Monuments Collection Expansion

The Main Library's Special Collections and Memory Lab actively engaged residents to preserve historical records, ensuring Richmond's history is documented by its own people a primary goal of the 2024 Mellon Grant. The Memory Lab was expanded to facilitate self-preservation, allowing visitors to digitize and save personal historical documents and media. These experiences can be very impactful for a person's identity in community. A major initiative was launched to grow the Monuments Collection archive by actively welcoming community contributions—such as photos, signs, and oral histories—to capture diverse voices related to the city's historical changes and telling a fuller story of Richmond.

3. Piloted New Programs for Opportunity Youth with Community Partners

RPL significantly enhanced resources for Opportunity Youth (young adults facing barriers to employment or education) through targeted programming and improved physical spaces. A long-awaited Young Adult space was opened at the Main Library, creating a dedicated hub for young adults to gather, research, study, and collaborate. The Young Adult Team hosted success and self-sufficiency workshops at the Peter Paul location. This vital youth development work was specifically supported by an external grant from Walmart.org (in association with the Urban Library Council).

4. Record Growth and Success of RippleCon 2025 Summer Reading Event

The Library's commitment to dynamic, popular programming, especially during out of school time, resulted in a highly successful major public event during the 2025 Summer Reading Program. RippleCon 2025 was a resounding success, with attendance growing year-over-year to approximately 600 youth and caregivers on a steamy Saturday in June. The event featured local authors, illustrators, community partners (like the RVA Lego User Group), and special guests, solidifying RPL's reputation as a dynamic cultural and community resource.

2025 Achievements (Continued):

5. Finalized Community-Informed Building Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Strategy

The Library completed the necessary strategic groundwork to advance future infrastructure investments across the branch system. The Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) finalized a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) strategy to guide modernization efforts at key branches, including Belmont, East End, and Westover Hills Branch Libraries. This strategy was informed by a Facilities Committee report that prioritized key community needs for welcoming and inviting library spaces, specifically emphasizing modern study and meeting rooms, improved technology, and flexible spaces for convening with neighbors.

6. Library Board of Trustees Actively Improved Policy, Governance, and Strategic Planning Through the Following Key Activities in 2025:

- Conducted a comprehensive review of all Library policies, updating or modifying them where appropriate.
- Initiated and developed a three-Board symposium (LBOT, RPL Foundation, and Friends of the Library) to address roles, responsibilities, and advocacy efforts.
- Created the facilities improvement and expansion strategy for RPL.
- Increased Trustee awareness of Library operations by featuring 10-minute+ presentations from different RPL leaders at each meeting.
- Generated new advocacy and awareness activities, including Summer Reading presentations at each City Council member's Town Hall event.

Priorities:

1. **Access** – **Richmond Public Library buildings and collections will be readily available to residents. Richmond Public Library locations must be open seven days a week and evenings to meet the needs and wants of the community.** Residents of Richmond rely on the library for resources that are sometimes only accessible at their library. Beyond book browsing, public access computers are the most in demand need. Access to high-speed Internet to search for work, do research, or fulfill an information need can only happen inside the library.

In some neighborhoods, simple tasks of making a copy, printing a digital file, sending a fax, or notary service is only available at the library. Preschool story time, delivered by a trained librarian, is an important program to develop family literacy and prepare children for school. Access to all these resources and programs are limited if the library is closed.

2. **Reading** – **Richmond Public Library will provide resources that build and cultivate literacy and a love of reading.** Library books continue to be the most in-demand resource Richmond Public Library provides the community. Surveys of the community conducted during the strategic planning process overwhelmingly indicated that access to quality books is the top priority. Today, information is packaged differently than it was 10 years ago. Physical books, E-books, and electronic information are driving libraries to meet information needs that are much more costly to deliver.

Library patrons demand that their library has the books they need when they want them. This is a great challenge that Richmond Public Library must meet. Books are essential to achieve Richmond Public Library's mission to inform, enrich and empower.

3. **Lifelong Learning** – **Prepare residents for life online, support digital citizenship by providing technology, Internet access, and training.** Richmond Public Library must keep up with the latest technology and networking to serve our patrons. Everyday life moves very quickly and much of it is online. Seeking an answer to a simple question, evaluating the veracity of a news source, applying for a job, poverty assistance or health benefits, and interacting with a child's teacher are all examples of activities that require proficiency with technology.

Users of public libraries are increasingly turning to libraries not only for access to technology, but also for opportunities to develop their online skills. This is especially true for vulnerable populations, like some job seekers, seniors, and formerly incarcerated men and women (or returning citizens), who have limited access to or knowledge of technology.

4. **Early Childhood Literacy** – **Amplify, Initiate and More (AIM): Expand RVA Reads, early family literacy, and grade level reading strategy.** Richmond Public Library is a champion of early childhood literacy. Story time, educational programs, and activities promote a love of reading in children to prepare them for school and life. We strive to Amplify, Initiate, and do More (AIM) for early literacy in 2022.

2025 Challenges:

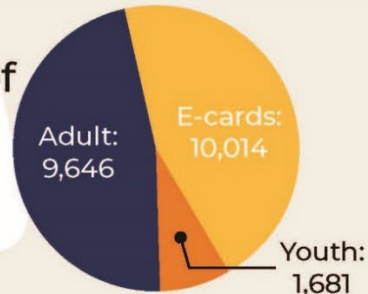
- 1. Infrastructure and Facility Modernization Needs.** A significant challenge was the need to address aging infrastructure across the branch system. The Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) spent time finalizing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) strategy to address modernization needs at various branches, including Belmont, East End, and Westover Hills Branch Libraries, indicating that updating these facilities was a necessary, ongoing priority.
- 2. Sustained Investment in Early Childhood Literacy.** While a core mission, achieving the overarching goal of expanding programs and increasing access for parents and caregivers to ensure all children are ready for first grade requires sustained, year-over-year investment and innovative outreach strategies to overcome barriers to access.
- 3. Continuous Adaptation of Youth and Young Adult Services.** The Library continually faced the operational challenge of remaining agile in its juvenile and young adult services. The Young Adult team specifically noted that their work requires constant adaptability as youth needs and interests evolve, making the continuous adjustment and sustainment of relevant programming an ongoing challenge.

By The Numbers

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025

**New Library
Cards Issued:
21,341**

Types of
Library
Cards
Issued



Visitors to Physical Locations:

556,488

Meeting Room Usage: 12,031

Virtual and In-person Reference Questions: 53,664

Visitors to our Website: 310,347

**Books Distributed by
Read with Ripple**

14,758



Programs

Number of Programs

4,861

Program Participants

54,248

Summer Reading
Program Participants

3,902



Total Items Checked Out:

1,158,006

Social Media

Followers

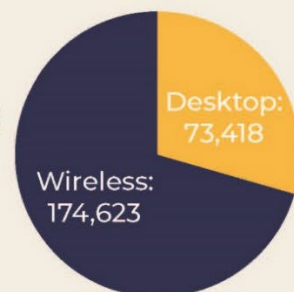
16,970

Reach

988,537

Total Technology Usage

248,041



**Money Saved by
Patrons Using
Library Resources**

\$31,515,661.00

according to the ALA's Library Value Calculator.