



**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**  
**February 25, 2026**

**PRESENT:** Chair Christine Peterson, Vice Chair Sheron Carter-Gunter, Emily Altman, Brent Graves, Antione Green, Cynthia Hinds, Janet Woody

**ABSENT:** Garrett Sawyer, William Yates, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

**STAFF:** Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Gianna Pack, Cheryl Clarke, Susan Revere, Phil Shephard, Heather Montgomery

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) meeting was called to order by Chair Christine Peterson at 11:51 a.m. at the Broad Rock Branch Library located at 4820 Old Warwick Road, Richmond, Virginia 23224. 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>	<p>Approve the February 25, 2026, Agenda as submitted.</p> <p><i>Motion: <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u>, Second by <u>Cynthia Hinds</u></i></p> <p><i>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>  <i>Mr. Brent Graves was not present for the vote.</i></p>
<b>Consent Agenda</b>	<p>Approve the December 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as Submitted:</p> <p><i>Motion: <u>Emily Altman</u>, Second by <u>Janet Woody</u></i></p> <p><i>AYES: <u>7</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i>  <i>Mr. Brent Graves was not present for the vote.</i></p>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	None present.
<b>Reports</b>	
<p><b>Friends of the Library (FOL)</b></p> <p><u>Ruth DeBoer</u>  <u>Clay Dishon</u></p>	<p>Mr. Dishon provided an update on the Friends of the Library’s activities in the absence of Chair Ruth DeBoer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruth will be out of town on Saturday, February 28. She is asking for members of the Friends Board to attend one or both of the City budget process meetings on that day if possible.</li> <li>• The next Board Meeting is on Wednesday, March 4 at 5:30 pm at the Main Library.</li> <li>• The Spring Book Drive is Saturday, March 21 from 9am - 2pm at the Main Library.</li> <li>• The Spring Book Sale is May 1, 2 and 3.</li> </ul>

<b>Reports (Continued)</b>	
<p><b>Library Foundation</b></p> <p><u>Susan Revere</u></p>	<p>Ms. Revere provided an update on the Foundation’s recent activities and developments:</p> <p><b><u>Foundation Updates</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Children’s Area Enhancements and Open Houses</u></b></p> <p>The Foundation is partnering with branch staff to introduce new resources in the Children’s areas across the library system. To celebrate these additions and engage new families, each branch will host an Open House once installations are complete. Dates will be shared as soon as they are confirmed.</p> <p><b><u>Early Learning Internships</u></b></p> <p>The Foundation secured a new donor for the Early Learning Internship Program. The Universal Leaf Foundation awarded a \$5,000 grant to the program.</p> <p>Job postings for the internships will be shared once available. Assistance in promoting these opportunities to college students interested in child education, literacy, child development, or teaching careers is appreciated.</p>
<p><b>Administration</b></p> <p><u>Scott Firestine</u></p>	<p>Mr. Firestine reported that there were no additional updates beyond what was included in his Director’s Report. He then expressed his sincere gratitude to the members for their thoughts, prayers, and kindness during his family’s recent tragic loss. He shared that the outpouring of support had meant more than he could truly express and that he would not have made it through this difficult time without it.</p>
<p><b>Broad Rock Branch Library Update</b></p> <p><u>Heather Montgomery</u></p>	<p>Library/Community Services Manager Heather Montgomery shared information regarding two major events hosted at the Broad Rock Branch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>9th Annual Black History Month Program</b> – The Broad Rock Branch Advisory Board presented another successful event, with approximately 129 attendees. The program featured eight speakers and an accompanying art display.</li> <li>2. <b>Día de los Niños Celebration</b> – The annual celebration will be held in April. Broad Rock received an anonymous \$7,000 donation to support this year’s event. The celebration will include community resource tables, story times, and performances throughout the afternoon, highlighting literacy and early childhood learning.</li> </ol> <p>Ms. Montgomery noted the program’s significant growth, from approximately 20 attendees in its first year to 450 attendees last year. She encouraged Board members to attend this year’s celebration on April 25 from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Advocacy Task Force</b></p> <p><u>Christine Peterson</u> <u>Sharon Carter-Gunter</u></p>	<p>Chair Peterson shared advocacy-related announcements:</p> <p><b><u>Advocacy Task Force Administrative Changes:</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mr. Green will replace Mr. Yates as the point person for the 5th District since he lives in that district.</li> <li>2. Ms. Carter-Gunter will be Chair of the Advocacy Task Force working with Mr. Green.</li> <li>3. Chair Peterson will support by leading in the 3-Board work and while in the chair capacity, be the point of contact for the Facilities Improvement and Expansion Initiative.</li> </ol>

**Reports (Continued)**

**Advocacy Task Force  
(Continued)**

Christine Peterson  
Sheron Carter-Gunter

**City Administration:**

The 3-Boards worked together quickly in response to the new budget approach, which included gathering community input through the first-ever Budget Town Hall meeting.

On January 20 (with 4 days' notice), Friends Chair Ruth DeBoer, Foundation member Rich Peterson, LBOT Chair Peterson and Ms. Carter-Gunter, and RPL Director Mr. Firestine and Ms. Revere attended the first meeting. They had visuals of the word "library" more times than it has ever been raised by the city in budget negotiations before.

Chair Peterson encouraged members to attend one of the two remaining Budget Town Halls:

- February 28, 10:30 am–12:30 pm at Annie Giles Resource Center
- February 28, 2–4 pm at Hickory Hill Community Center
  - Registration is required — details and links are available at: <https://rva.gov/budget-and-strategic-planning/fy27-budget-season>

Mr. Firestine expressed his gratitude to the members for attending the Town Hall meetings. The Town Halls Budget Meetings are opportunities to have the library stand out where the city sees us, hears us, and how important we are to the community.

**Policy Taskforce**

Emily Altman

No Formal Report.

**Chair Report**

Christine Peterson, Chair

Chair Peterson reported last year was very productive and she was very proud of what the board accomplished:

1. 1st Trustee-led 3-Board Retreat in years.
2. Completed a comprehensive review of all RPL Policies to date.
3. Received \$1M in CIP funds to purchase a bookmobile and help branches now and, in the future with renovations and growth.
4. Unanimously developed and approved a Facilities Expansion and Improvement strategy.
5. Attended Councilmember Town Hall to talk about Summer Reading with LBOTs, Library/Community Services Managers of the Branches, Youth Services Librarians, and RPL Administration.

**Reports (Continued)**

**Finance**

Bill Yates, Chair  
Scott Firestine

Mr. Firestine reported the following:

- A list of Council Budget Meetings was distributed to Board members.
- The Mayor will introduce his budget on March 11.
- On January 2, the Report of RPL’s proposed budget request was submitted for support and funding.
- In early February, City Administration asked all departments to recommend what a 2% reduction to the FY26 Budget would look like if it were FY27. Mr. Firestine prepared a projection outlining a tentative proposal for a 2% cut, which includes:
  1. Delaying the installation of security cameras at branch locations
  2. Holding vacant the Senior Librarian position for the Law Library
  3. Postponing other infrastructure projects

Mr. Firestine explained that the goal is to identify reductions that would cause the least amount of harm to library services. Service hours, resources, and materials remain the highest priorities. RPL Administration does not want to eliminate any frontline staff positions or reduce service hours. The intent is to demonstrate continued forward progress while making a responsible case for sustained funding support.

**Facilities**

Janet Woody, Chair  
Scott Firestine

Mr. Firestine reported on two key topics:

**Expansion/Renovation of Library Sites:**

Mr. Firestine reported on the ongoing assessment of priority library locations for potential renovation and/or replacement. Dewberry Architects has been hired to conduct an evaluation of the three primary sites identified as the oldest and most critical facilities: Belmont Branch Library, Westover Hills Branch Library, and East End Branch Library.

Mr. Firestine stated that the project team met with a group of architects and engineers who have already completed site visits. During these visits, the team photographed the facilities and evaluated site conditions. Once architectural drawings and site plans are provided, Dewberry will assess whether it is feasible to construct larger library facilities at the existing locations.

The final assessment report is expected to be completed by April and will be presented to the LBOT shortly thereafter.

**Bookmobile:**

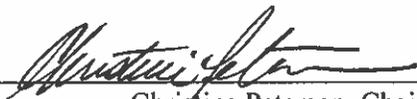
Mr. Firestine reported that he and Ms. Clarke are working with City of Richmond Fleet Department to procure a new bookmobile. Fleet Services has been evaluating an approximately 26-foot electric freightliner box truck for this purpose.

The estimated delivery timeframe is between 350 and 400 days after purchase. An additional meeting is being scheduled to review specifications and finalize vendor selection.

<b>Reports (Continued)</b>	
<b>Governance</b>  <u>Scott Firestine</u> <u>Garrett Sawyer, Chair</u>	Mr. Graves turned in his reappointment paperwork for consideration to be appointed to the LBOT when his term is up in June.
<b>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</b>	
Chair Peterson brought forth the topic of the next 3-Board Retreat to be considered to happen around the April/May evening timeframe. The focus of the theme could be on messages, goals, or other. Chair Peterson will email the Trustees, Friends, and Foundation members in the middle of March with a status. She also asked members to think about other themes and provide input as well.	
<b>NEW BUSINESS</b>	
No New Business was discussed.	

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m. by unanimous consent from the members who were present.

The LBOT's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at the East End Branch Library located at 1200 N 25th Street, Richmond, Virginia, 23223, starting at 11:45 a.m.

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

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*  
 Senior Executive Assistant