



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
June 24, 2026

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

ABSENT: Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer, Cheryl Clarke

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Gianna Pack, Susan Revere, Phil Shephard

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) meeting was called to order by Chair Christine Peterson at 11:46 a.m. at the West End Branch Library located at 5420 Patterson Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226. 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 June 24, 2026, Agenda as submitted. <i>Motion: <u>Sharon Carter-Gunter</u>, Second by <u>Cynthia Hinds</u></i> <i>AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> <i>Mr. Green was not present for the vote.</i>
Consent Agenda	Approve the May 27, 2026, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as Submitted: <i>Motion: <u>Janet Woody</u>, Second by <u>Emily Altman</u></i> <i>AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> Approved Unanimously.</i> <i>Mr. Green was not present for the vote.</i>
Public Comment Period	None present. Chair Peterson welcomed all guests in attendance.

Reports	
Friends of the Library (FOL) <u>Ruth DeBoer</u> <u>Clay Dishon</u>	Mr. Dishon reported on updated activities of the Friends of the Library for Ruth DeBoer in her absences: • Next Friends Board Meeting: July 8, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., Main Library • Interviewing new members in process • Pursuing a new CRM (customer/client relationship management) system.
Library Foundation <u>Susan Revere</u>	Ms. Revere provided an update on the Foundation's recent activities and developments. <u>Early Learning Lab Update</u> Staff reported on the May 30 Early Learning Lab featuring Dr. Ron Ferguson and <i>The Basics for Children and Their Caregivers</i>. More than 40 parents, caregivers, and children attended the event at the Main Library, which included a presentation, question-and-answer session, and a guided tour of the children's space. The event was well received, and staff expressed appreciation for the strong community participation. <u>Children's Area Upgrades</u> The first Children's Area Open House was held at the Ginter Park Branch, where Ripple joined approximately 10 children and their families for photos and refreshments. Additional Open Houses are scheduled for June 25 at the Westover Hills Branch, July 12 at the North Avenue Branch, and July 29 at the West End Branch. Staff noted that these events highlight the ongoing enhancements to children's spaces and the positive impact of the Library Board of Trustees' continued investment in children's literacy. <u>Partnerships</u> Richmond Public Library will begin a one-year partnership with Junior Achievement (JA) in July. The partnership will provide a one-day Job Shadow program for local high school students and offer access to two interactive digital curriculum tools at no cost to the library: 1. JA Lifestyle Tool, which explores lifestyle choices and financial planning. 2. JA Career Tool, which connects educational pathways with career opportunities and projected earnings. Additional program details will be shared as implementation begins. <u>Grants</u> The Schaberg Foundation awarded Richmond Public Library a \$75,000 grant. The funding will support internships, including a new MLIS internship, expand youth programming across the library system, and assist with renovations to create safe and welcoming branch spaces for all ages. A grant application supporting the Read with Ripple program has been submitted to the REB Foundation, with a funding decision expected in the fall. In addition, staff are preparing a grant request to Dominion Energy.

Reports (Continued)	
Administration <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine highlighted the following items from the Director's Report: • Circulation has surpassed 1.2 million items with one month remaining in the fiscal year. • Another successful RippleCon year. • Received positive publicity surrounding the Free Press donation to the collection along having productive discussions with the Boone family about expanding the collection and strengthening partnerships throughout the City to further preserve and share Richmond's history. • Summer Reading Program continues to perform well, with strong program attendance and steady youth registration.
West End Branch Library Update <u>Lisa Crisman</u>	Library/Community Services Manager Lisa Crisman reported that the West End Branch continues to be a busy destination for readers, particularly during the summer months. Staff regularly assist patrons with physical collections, digital resources, DVDs, and Kanopy, while supporting families, grandparents, and travelers with their summer reading needs. Ms. Crisman noted that the branch's Crafting Conversations Program has grown into a popular monthly gathering, attracting participants from across the library system. She also highlighted a typical busy day at the branch, which included tutoring, Toddler Storytimes, Summer Reading activities, one-on-one technology assistance, and a local homeowners association meeting. Throughout the day, staff provided readers' advisory, technology support, printing services, and meeting space, demonstrating the branch's role as both a library and a community hub.
Advocacy Task Force <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u> <u>Antonie Green</u>	No Formal Report.
Policy Taskforce <u>Emily Altman</u>	Ms. Altman reported that the Richmond Public Library Strategic Plan (2022–2027) continues to be under review. She noted that she and Mr. Firestine are working on revisions and anticipate having a draft document available for discussion at the September 23, 2026, meeting.
Chair Report <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	Chair Peterson provided an update on the Library's facility improvement and expansion strategy, which focuses on three priorities: bringing the Main Library up to code, expanding the system's three smallest, oldest, and highly utilized branch libraries, and constructing a new library south of the river to improve geographic equity, noting that the library system currently has five branches north of the river and three south of the river. Chair Peterson reported that she and Mr. Firestine recently met with Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Human Services Amy Popovich to discuss the status of the facilities initiative. Ms. Popovich will coordinate a meeting with Mayor Danny Avula and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Odie Donald to prepare for the upcoming Capital Improvement Program (CIP) discussions.

Reports (Continued)	
Chair Report (Continued) <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	Chair Peterson further reported that Ms. Popovich requested that she and Mr. Firestine brief key stakeholders in advance to ensure alignment before the meeting and prepare a concise, practical one-page summary outlining the current status of the initiative. The summary has been shared with the Mayor, the DCAO, the CAO, and City leadership as well as in each Trustees' packet. It includes a request for approximately \$75 million to construct/expand the existing three branch libraries and to build an additional new library in the Commerce Road area as part of the Harper Associates development. A meeting to discuss the proposal has been scheduled for July 24, 2026.
Finance <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine reported that staff is wrapping up the current fiscal year and preparing for the transition to FY2027. He noted that \$1 million will be transferred into the Capital Improvement Program fund, making those resources available in addition to funds allocated in the last fiscal year. He also reported that the overall FY2027 budget includes a 2% reduction in operating funds while providing an increase in personnel funding, which will start July 1, 2026. Mr. Firestine also mentioned that the bookmobile is moving forward.
Facilities <u>Janet Woody, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Ms. Woody reported that the virtual meeting with Dewberry was productive. Branch Managers from the East End, Westover Hills, and Belmont Branches participated, providing feedback, asking questions, and sharing input on the proposed concepts. Following Dewberry's departure from the meeting, attendees continued the discussion, focusing primarily on concerns related to parking. Mr. Firestine reported that he will work with Dewberry to revise the conceptual drawings to incorporate parking options and illustrate how those changes would affect the building's overall square footage. The updated concepts will allow the Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) to compare designs with and without dedicated parking. He noted that he has a meeting scheduled with Dewberry to establish the scope of work for these revisions, with an updated report or addendum expected within 30 to 60 days.
Governance <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	Chair Peterson provided an update on the current status of vacancies on the Board and noted that elections for the Chair and Vice Chair would be held later in the meeting under New Business. She reported that there are currently two vacant trustee positions. Seven applications were received to fill the vacancies, with the appointed trustees serving the remainder of the terms through June 30, 2028. Of the seven applicants, five reside in districts that are not currently represented on the Board. Chair Peterson outlined the appointment process, explaining that the applications will be reviewed by the Education and Human Services Standing Committee on July 9 at 2:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall, with a virtual attendance option available. The committee's recommendations are expected to be forwarded to City Council, with final appointments anticipated at the July 27 City Council meeting.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
Chair Peterson announced due to an emergency illness of Reagan Thacker, the 3-Board Retreat was postponed. She will follow up with Ms. Thacker in a couple of weeks to see when a best time would be to reschedule.	

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Peterson announced once there is a full board established in September or October timeframe, there will be an opportunity for members to change leadership of committee or taskforce, but not at this meeting.

Members proceeded to vote on Chair and Vice Chair positions.

1. Is there a motion to re-elect Christine Peterson as Chair to the Library Board of Trustees for a period of one year to start on July 1, 2026, and end on June 30, 2027, at which time her term ends with the Board.

Motion: Antione Green

Second: Sheron Carter-Gunter

2. Is there a motion to elect Brent Graves as Vice Chair to the Library Board of Trustees for a period of two years to start on July 1, 2026, and end on June 30, 2028.

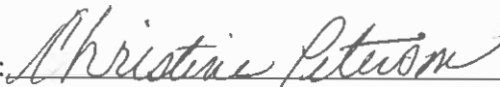
Motion: Antione Green

Second: Sheron Carter-Gunter

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m. by unanimous consent from the members who were present.

The LBOT's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 22, 2026, at the Ginter Park Branch Library located at 1200 Westbrook Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23227, starting at 11:45 a.m.

Approved: _____



Christine Peterson, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*
Senior Executive Assistant