



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
July 22, 2026

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

ABSENT: Antione Green, Susan Revere

STAFF: Scott Firestine, Clay Dishon, Attorney Shannan Fitzgerald, Gianna Pack, Cheryl Clarke, Louis Maranski, Phil Shephard, Heather Montgomery, Friends of the Library Chair Ruth DeBoer

The Richmond Public Library (RPL) Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) meeting was called to order by Chair Christine Peterson at 11:45 a.m. at the Ginter Park Branch Library located at 1200 Westbrook Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23227. 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 July 22, 2026, Agenda as submitted. <i>Motion: <u>Sheron 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>
Consent Agenda	Approve the June 24, 2026, Meeting Minutes, the Current Financial Reports, Statistical Reports, and Donations Report as Submitted: <i>Motion: <u>Emily Altman</u>, Second by <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u></i> <i>AYES: <u>6</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>	Ms. DeBoer reported on updated activities of the Friends of the Library: • Next Friends Board Meeting: August 5, at 5:30PM, at the Main Library • In the process of updating the Friends website. • Focus for FY2027 is engaging more volunteers and members.

Reports (Continued)	
Library Foundation <u>Susan Revere</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine reported the Foundation activities in Susan Revere's absence: • No new grants at this time. • Foundation had their annual meeting in June. • Ribbon Cuttings for the Early Learning Activity Centers at North Avenue and Ginter Park Branches with Ripple in attendance.
Ginter Park Branch Library Update <u>Louis Maranski</u>	Library/Community Services Manager Lousi Maranski reported the Ginter Park Branch Library has experienced significant growth and positive momentum over the past six months. In January, the branch expanded its public service hours by opening one hour earlier (9:00 a.m.), Monday through Saturday and extending Tuesday and Wednesday evening hours until 8:00 p.m., adding a total of 10 service hours each week. Since the expanded hours were implemented, the branch has seen a notable increase in use, with door count rising from 21,841 during January–June 2025 to 26,002 during the same period in 2026. Program participation also increased, with attendance growing from 1,376 participants across 251 programs in 2025 to 1,592 participants attending 253 programs in 2026. The branch continues to strengthen its community presence through expanded outreach and partnerships. Staff collaborated with the Bellevue Civic Association on monthly Food Truck events and the Garden Walk, worked with local schools including John Marshall High School, Henderson Middle School, and McClenney Elementary School, and continued the popular book club partnership with Westminster Canterbury. As part of the Greening Richmond Public Libraries initiative, Ginter Park is preparing for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 23 to celebrate the addition of native plants to the branch landscaping. The branch also celebrated the successful renovation of its Children's Area with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 23, receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback from families. Looking ahead, Ginter Park staff plans to continue expanding programming opportunities, including a Spice Club, additional outdoor programs, and technology support services. Future improvements also include remodeling space to create a dedicated Teen Area, further enhancing services for the community.
Administration <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine highlighted that Mayor Danny Avula will attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Ginter Park Branch Library on July 23 to celebrate the completion of the latest green infrastructure project under the Greening Richmond Public Libraries Initiative. He noted that the initiative aims to improve the health of the James River by reducing stormwater pollution and was made possible through collaboration among the James River Association, the Department of Public Utilities, PlanRVA, architects, contractors, and many others.

Reports (Continued)	
Advocacy Task Force <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u> <u>Antonie Green</u>	Ms. Carter-Gunter led a discussion on the Library's advocacy priorities, encouraging Board members to identify key initiatives to communicate with City and community leaders. The Board discussed the importance of establishing clear budget priorities and funding requests to support the Library's strategic goals. Additional advocacy priorities included advancing the Library's facilities expansion initiative, promoting children's literacy and lifelong learning, strengthening partnerships with Richmond Public Schools to ensure every student receives a library card, and expanding the use of QR codes to promote library services while reducing paper usage throughout the City. Ms. Carter-Gunter invited Board members to share any additional advocacy priorities that had not been discussed and encouraged them to submit suggestions directly to her for inclusion in the Library's advocacy agenda and future discussions.
Policy Taskforce <u>Emily Altman</u>	No Formal Report
Chair Report <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	No Formal Report
Finance <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine provided an overview of the City of Richmond's approved FY2027 Library Budget for the Library Board of Trustees (LBOT), explaining that the Board is required to formally accept or decline the funds appropriated by the City to operate the Library. Board members were provided with a copy of the budget as approved and adopted by Richmond City Council. Mr. Firestine noted that the FY2027 budget includes an increase in personnel funding to support the 3.25% salary increase and associated wage benefits provided under the City's collective bargaining agreement. He also explained that the operating budget reflects a 2% reduction, representing the elimination of one position. Chair Peterson reminded Board members that the LBOT serves as the governing body of the Library and has a fiduciary responsibility for its financial oversight. She then called for a vote on acceptance of the FY2027 Library Budget. Approve to accept the FY2027 Budget for the Richmond Public Library as submitted by City of Richmond: Motion: <u>Cynthia Hinds</u>, Second by <u>Janet Woody</u> AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> <i>Approved Unanimously.</i>

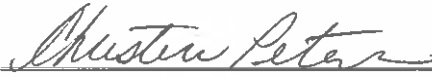
Reports (Continued)	
Facilities <u>Janet Woody, Chair</u> <u>Scott Firestine</u>	Mr. Firestine reported that the General Services Department requested to shampoo the carpets throughout the Main Library and recommended closing the building on Sunday, August 16, to allow sufficient time for the carpets to dry before reopening. Following the report, Chair Peterson called for a motion to approve the temporary closure. Approve closing the Main Library on Sunday, August 16, to allow for carpet cleaning throughout the facility. Motion: <u>Sheron Carter-Gunter</u>, Second by <u>Cynthia Hinds</u> AYES: <u>6</u> NOES: <u>0</u> ABSTAIN: <u>0</u> <i>Approved Unanimously.</i> Chair Peterson also reported that she, Vice Chair Brent Graves, and Mr. Firestine have a meeting scheduled with Mayor Danny Avula, CAO Odie Donald, and DCAO Amy Popovich on July 29 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the Library's facilities expansion initiative. She explained that the purpose of the meeting is to educate the Mayor and City leadership about Richmond Public Library's long-term facility needs, build support for future expansion projects, and strengthen the partnership between City leadership, Library Administration, and the Library Board of Trustees as planning efforts move forward.
Governance <u>Christine Peterson, Chair</u>	Chair Peterson reported that there are currently two vacant trustee positions on the Board. Seven applications were received to fill the vacancies, with the appointed trustees serving the remainder of the current terms through June 30, 2028. She noted that her recommendation to the City Clerk was to appoint candidates who do not currently represent a district on the Board. The Education and Human Services Standing Committee reviewed the applications and selected Linda Pechin, a retired Richmond Public Schools educator representing the Third District, and Samuel Runner, a frequent library user who is actively involved in civic association meetings from the Seventh District, as its recommended candidates. Chair Peterson also noted that Mr. Brooks attended the LBOT meeting in her recommendation. She also reported that the Education and Human Services Standing Committee met on July 9 at 2:00 p.m. The committee's recommendations were expected to be forwarded to Richmond City Council, with final appointments anticipated at the July 27 City Council meeting.
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
The Board discussed rescheduling the joint 3-Board Meeting. Two potential dates were identified: Thursday, August 27, and Tuesday, September 1. Chair Peterson asked Board members to review their calendars and notify her if either date presented a conflict. She emphasized the importance of selecting a date that would allow key representatives from all three Boards, as well as Richmond Public Library Administration and leadership.	

NEW BUSINESS
No New Business was discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. by unanimous consent from the members who were present.

There is no meeting in August. The LBOT's next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at the Main Library located at 101 E. Franklin Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, starting at 11:45 a.m.

Approved: _____



Christine Peterson, Chair

Recorder: *Gianna Pack, CAP*
Senior Executive Assistant