

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

ANNUAL REPORT – 2021



RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

William Yates, *Chair*

Christine Peterson, *Vice Chair*

Emily Altman

Barbara Burton

Sheron Carter-Gunter

Brent Graves

Garrett Sawyer

Janet Woody

Gail Zwirner

*The mission of the Richmond Public Library 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

William Yates, Chair

Email: watesva@gmail.com
Chair Term: 7/22/2020-7/27/2022
Filled Unexpired Chair Term: 9/25/2019-7/22/2020
2nd term ending 06/30/2024 (Reappointment)
1st term ending 06/30/2020 (Council)
District: 1st

Emily Altman

Email: owens.ema@gmail.com
1st term ending 07/22/2023 (Council)
District: 5th

Barbara Burton

Email: dankiejones@gmail.com
2nd term ending 06/30/2024 (Reappointment)
1st term ending 06/30/2020 (Council)
District: 3rd

Sheron Carter-Gunter

Email: sheroncg@gmail.com
1st term ending 06/30/2024 (Council)
District: 4th

Brent Graves

Email: Brent.L.Graves@gmail.com
Replacement term: 07/27/2020-06/30/2022
District: 4th

Christine Peterson, Vice Chair

Email: christine.peterson@hotmail.com
Vice Chair Term: 7/22/2020-7/27/2022
1st term ending 07/22/2023 (Council)
District: 2nd

Garrett Sawyer

Email: Garrett.Sawyer@wayforth.com
1st term ending 06/30/2024 (Council)
District: 4th

Janet Woody

Email: janetwoody@mail.com
1st term ending 07/22/2023 (Council)
District: 4th

Gail F. Zwirner

Email: gzwirner52@gmail.com
1st term ending 06/30/2024 (Council)
District: 2nd

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); Dates of Meetings (Calendar Year)

NAME	01/27/2021	02/24/2021	03/24/2021	04/28/2021	05/26/2021	06/23/2021	07/28/2021	08/18/21 Work Session	09/22/2021	10/27/2021	November No Meeting	12/01/2021	Number of Meetings Attended for CY
Yates, William (Chair)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	10
Peterson, Christine (Vice Chair)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	10
Altman, Emily	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11
Burton, Barbara	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11
Carter-Gunter	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11
Graves, Brent	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11
Sawyer, Garrett	x	x		x	x		x			x			6
Woody, Janet	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	10
Zwirner, Gail	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	11
# in Attendance:	8	9	8	9	9	7	9	8	7	9		8	

4. Expectations and Responsibilities of Boards and Commissions

The Richmond Public Library 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 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 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

5. 2021 Achievements / Priorities / Challenges:

Achievements:

1. **Book Circulation increases 3%:** Since June of 2021, Richmond Library users surpass pre-pandemic 2019 book circulation levels by an average of 3%.
2. **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):** Richmond Public Libraries was awarded an ARPA IMLS Library of Virginia grant in the amount of \$26,350.00. Funds will be utilized to purchase Envisionware hardware/software self-service scan/fax platform. This will enable free self-service faxing and scanning at all locations.
3. **The Emergency Connectivity Fund Program Grant Award:** This grant provides funding to libraries for the reasonable costs of laptop and tablet computers, Wi-Fi hotspots, routers, modems, and broadband Internet connections for use by library patrons at locations that include locations other than a school or library. Funding is limited to library patrons who would otherwise lack access to connected devices and broadband Internet services sufficient to engage in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. RPL will purchase 135 laptops and 180 hotspots with grant funds that may be checked out to patrons to use to meet this unmet computer or broadband need. Grant total \$89,926.
4. **Network Infrastructure Upgrade:** All RPL locations received network hardware replacements of routers, switches, and power supplies in the summer of 2021. This replaced equipment at the end of life to ensure stable, efficient, and improved Internet access for the public at all locations. E-rate funding provided \$193,467 for the project. DIT and Library IT procured, configured, and installed all equipment.
5. **Virginia Library Association (VLA):** Law Librarian Meldon Jenkins-Jones was awarded the Virginia Library Association Librarian of Color Award for 2021. This recognition is well deserved. Ms. Jenkins-Jones goes above and beyond to ensure all of RPL library users are well served. She is a leader in equity, diversity, and inclusion and makes a difference in RVA.
6. **RVA H2O:** City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities, James River Association, and RPL partnered to be awarded a DEQ 419 grant to make storm water landscape modifications at the North Avenue, Broad Rock, and West End Branch Libraries. This project will mitigate 100% of storm water at those locations and demonstrate/promote water conservation to the community.
7. **RVA Reads Program:** Over 1,314 children in Richmond's Preschool programs received a book in November 2021 and 4,114 books were distributed in 2021. The Robbins Foundation awarded RVA Reads a \$10,000 grant. Children in Headstart received books to build their at-home libraries.
8. **RPL Five Year Strategic Plan:** Richmond Public Library Board developed the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan; in-process.
9. **Master Plan for Main Library Renovation:** Stineburg/Hart and KEI Architects developed renovation master plan for the Main Library.

Priorities:

1. **Library 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 of 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 RPL 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. **Digital Citizenship – 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 – 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.

Challenges:

1. The pandemic is the most challenging crisis our library has faced in the last 70 years. COVID19 will change the way we provide library service in the future. There are many services that have been adapted and will see improvement in the post pandemic environment.
1. The FY20 and FY21 budget reductions and hiring freeze forced RPL to reduce evening open hours, stop all Sunday library service in all locations, and has reduced acquisitions of books and electronic resources. Decreased staffing has forced the library to reduce and pause programs by youth, adults, and seniors. This funding reduction negatively impacts RPL's effort to achieve the mission to inform, enrich and empower.
2. Recruitment and retention of competent and qualified staff is a challenge during the pandemic and turbulent economic time period.

Richmond Public Library

Fiscal Year
2020-2021

By The Numbers



6,686

New Library
Cards Issued



480,776

Items Checked Out
(Including Print, Digital, & Media)



\$7,072,265

Amount Patrons
Saved By Using
Library Materials



According to the ALA's
Library Value Calculator



Books Distributed by
RVA Reads

9,600



7,114

Total Number of
Virtual Program and
Craft Kit Participants



1,622

Social Media Posts
& Video
Uploads



9,745

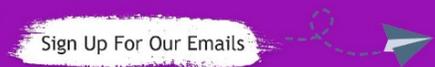
Total Social Media
Followers



Sign Up For Our Emails

913,850

Emails Sent to
Subscribers of
RPL @ Home



866

Virtual Reference
Questions?
Answered.



137,074

Total Visitors
to the
RPL Website

*For the majority of the FY '20-'21 period, all Richmond Public Library locations were providing curbside service only, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.