

**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

**LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (LBOT)**

**DECEMBER 29, 2023**



# **RICHMOND PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**William Yates, *Chair***

**Sheron Carter-Gunter, *Vice Chair***

**Emily Altman**

**Barbara Burton**

**Brent Graves**

**Christine Peterson**

**Garrett Sawyer**

**Janet Woody**

**Gail Zwirner**

*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

**William Yates, Chair** *1st District*  
Email: [w Yatesva@gmail.com](mailto:w Yatesva@gmail.com)  
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  
Replacement Term: 04/10/2017-06/30/2020  
1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment)

**Christine Peterson** *2nd District*  
Email: [christine.peterson@hotmail.com](mailto:christine.peterson@hotmail.com)  
Vice Chair Term: 07/22/2020-07/27/2022  
1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment)  
2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027

**Sheron Carter-Gunter, Vice Chair** *4th District*  
Email: [sheroncg@gmail.com](mailto:sheroncg@gmail.com)  
Vice Chair term: 07/27/2022-06/26/2024  
1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment)

**Garrett Sawyer** *4th District*  
Email: [sawyerhrconsult@gmail.com](mailto:sawyerhrconsult@gmail.com)  
1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment)

**Emily Altman** *5th District*  
Email: [owens.ema@gmail.com](mailto:owens.ema@gmail.com)  
1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment)  
2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027

**Janet Woody** *4th District*  
Email: [janetwoody@mail.com](mailto:janetwoody@mail.com)  
1st term: 07/22/2019-07/22/2023 (Appointment)  
2nd term: 07/01/2023-06/30/2027

**Barbara Burton** *3rd District*  
Email: [dankiejones@gmail.com](mailto:dankiejones@gmail.com)  
1st term: 07/01/2016-06/30/2020 (Appointment)  
2nd term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Reappointment)

**Gail F. Zwirner** *2nd District*  
Email: [gzwirner52@gmail.com](mailto:gzwirner52@gmail.com)  
1st term: 07/01/2020-06/30/2024 (Appointment)

**Brent L. Graves** *4th District*  
Email: [Brent.L.Graves@gmail.com](mailto:Brent.L.Graves@gmail.com)  
Replacement term: 07/27/2020-06/30/2022  
1st term: 07/01/2022-06/30/2026 (Appointment)

## 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.

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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 2023)

Library Board of Trustees  
Richmond Public Library

	NAME	1/25/2023	2/22/2022	3/22/2022	4/26/2022	5/24/2022	6/28/2022	7/26/2022	9/27/2022	10/25/2023	12/6/2023	Number of Meetings Attended for CY	%
1	Yates, William (Chair)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	8	80.0%
2	Carter-Gunter, Sheron (Vice Chair)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	100%
3	Altman, Emily	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	100%
4	Burton, Barbara	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	9	90%
5	Graves, Brent	x	x	x		x	x	x	x			7	70%
6	Peterson, Christine	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9	90%
7	Sawyer, Garrett		x	x	x		x		x	x	x	7	70%
8	Woody, Janet	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	100%
9	Zwirner, Gail	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	100%
	# in Attendance:	8	8	8	8	8	9	8	8	6	8		

## 4. Dates of Meetings (January 1 – December 30, 2023)



### 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 2023 (4th Wednesdays)	
<b>January 25, 2023</b> 11:45 AM East End Branch Library	<b>July 26, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Belmont Branch Library
<b>February 22, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Broad Rock Branch Library	<b>August 2023</b> No Meeting
<b>March 22, 2023</b> 11:45 AM <b>Main Library (New Location)</b> <i>Due to North Avenue Branch Closure</i>	<b>September 27, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Main Library
<b>April 26, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Main Library	<b>October 25, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Ginter Park Branch Library
<b>May 24, 2023</b> 11:45 AM Westover Hills Branch Library	<b>November 2023</b> No Meeting
<b>June 28, 2023</b> 11:45 AM West End Branch Library	<b>December 6, 2023</b> <i>(Combined Nov/Dec Meeting)</i> 11:45 AM Hull Street Branch Library

*Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: December 7, 2022*



## Dates of Meetings (January 1 – December 30, 2024)



### Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees

101 E. Franklin Street  
 Richmond, Virginia 23219  
 O: (804) 646-4256 / F: (804) 646-7685

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<b>January 24, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Main Library	<b>July 24, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Ginter Park Branch Library
<b>February 28, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Broad Rock Branch Library	<b>August 2024</b> No Meeting
<b>March 27, 2024</b> 11:45 AM East End Branch Library	<b>September 25, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Main Library
<b>April 24, 2024</b> 11:45 AM North Avenue Branch Library	<b>October 23, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Hull Street Branch Library
<b>May 22, 2024</b> 11:45 AM Main Library	<b>November 2024</b> No Meeting
<b>June 26, 2024</b> 11:45 AM West End Branch Library	<b>December 4, 2024</b> <i>(Combined Nov/Dec Meeting)</i> Westover Hills Branch Library 11:45 AM

*Approved by the Library Board of Trustees: December 6, 2023*

## 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. 2023 Achievements / Priorities / Challenges:

### Achievements:

1. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Richmond Public Library was celebrated with programs and historical presentations of our 100 years of service.
2. **Maya Smart Call to Action for Early Childhood Literacy.** Maya Smart, renowned Richmonder, Christmas Mother and celebrity of VCU Final Four Basketball team from 2013, visited and led a call to action for early childhood literacy. Ms. Smart wrote, *Reading for Our Lives*, which is a guide for parents and caregivers for children birth to five years of age.
3. **Summer Reading Program Success!** Doubled the number of participants over 2022. 2,641 participants in the 2023 Summer Reading Program.
4. **Master Plan for Main Library Renovation:** January 2023 Richmond Public Library Board of Trustees approved the Main Library Facility Master Plan. This report presents aspirational goals, objectives, and dreams the community wishes to happen at the Main Library at 101 Franklin Street.
5. **Read Up, Richmond!** Nationally recognized Virginia author S.A. Cosby visited and was in conversation with Dale Brumfield, November 14, 2023.
6. **Rain Gardens, Beautiful Library Landscaping, and Improved James River Water Quality:** East End Branch Library added stormwater mitigation landscaping and grounds enhancements to make the library environmentally friendly and welcoming.
7. **Mellon Foundation Award for the Expansion of the Richmond Public Library Memory Lab to support Public Knowledge:** \$900,000 award over 5 years.
8. **North Avenue Branch Library Interior Repairs.** Water infiltration caused damage to the branch in December 2022. The Branch was closed for six months for repairs and reopened with interior improvements to make the library more welcoming and comfortable for library users.
9. **Community Memory Fellow, Chloe McCormack.** Grant from the Richmond Public Library Foundation and the Virginia Museum of History and Culture supported this position to assist in curation of historic collections, development of the Richmond Room, and expansion of the Memory Lab.
10. Total Library circulation is 802,720 for the most in 10 years.
11. Gellman Concert Series celebrated 50 years of programming.

## 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.

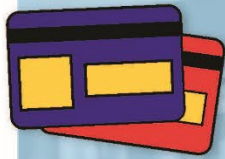
3. **Lifelong Learning – Prepare residents for life online. support digital citizenship by providing technology, Internet access, and training.** Richmond Public Library must keep up with the latest technology and networking to serve our patrons. Everyday life moves very quickly and much of it is online. 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.

## **Challenges:**

1. **Early Childhood Literacy.** Expanding programs and increasing access for parents and caregivers to assist in the process of helping children prepare for first grade.
2. **Young Adults.** Increase programs to attract, connect with and retain young adults. Richmond Public Library can provide opportunities for enrichment, cultural and social learning that will be interventions to violence.
3. Unsheltered connection and services to pathways out of poverty and homelessness.

# Richmond Public Library

By The Numbers



# 14,950

New Library Cards Issued

# 802,720

Items Checked Out

(Including Print, Digital, & Media)



# 11,722

Books Distributed  
by RVA Reads



# 23,321

Program Participants

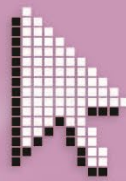


# 409,747

Visitors to our Physical Locations

# 317,690

Total Visitors to the RPL Website



# 9,553

Total Social Media  
Followers



# 156,811

Social Media Reach



# 1,042

Virtual and In-Person  
Reference Questions



# 258,535

Informational and  
Promotional Emails

# \$20,189,579.40

Amount Patrons Saved By  
Using Library Materials

According to the ALA's Library Value Calculator.

Fiscal Year  
2022 - 2023