

**THE LIBRARY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES**

*April 22, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.*

*Slover Library, 235 E. Plume St., Norfolk, VA 23510*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

C. Paul Brockwell Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. He noted the meeting would be electronic and livestreamed, meaning all votes will need to be conducted by roll call. On the advice of counsel, virtual participants were asked to keep video cameras on during the meeting. The combination of on-site board members and virtual board members constituted a quorum. Members attending were:

C. Paul Brockwell Jr., chair  
Blythe Ann Scott, vice chair  
Laura L.L. Blevins  
Peter E. Broadbent Jr. (Virtual)  
L. Preston Bryant Jr.  
Dr. Robert L. Canida II  
Dr. Shelley Viola Murphy  
Dr. Mary Prentice (Virtual)  
Mr. Malfourd W. Trumbo

Members absent: Maya Castillo, Suzette Denslow, Carol Finerty, Lana Real and Leonard Tengco.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Brockwell asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Blevins moved; and Dr. Murphy seconded. The Board approved the agenda unanimous by a roll call vote: **Ayes** – Blevins, Broadbent, Brockwell, Bryant, Canida, Murphy, Prentice, Scott, and Trumbo; **Nos** – none; **Abstentions** – none.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR JANUARY 8, 2024**

Mr. Brockwell asked for changes to the minutes presented. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Ms. Scott and seconded by Dr. Canida. The Board approved the minutes by a roll call vote: **Ayes** – Blevins, Broadbent, Brockwell, Bryant, Canida, Murphy, Prentice, and Scott; **Nos** – none; **Abstentions** – Trumbo. Mr. Trumbo abstained from the vote since he had not yet been appointed to serve on the Library Board and was not present at the January 8 meeting.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF THE COMMENDING RESOLUTION

Mr. Brockwell introduced a commending resolution for the Tidewater Area Public Libraries. He noted the presence of Amanda Jackson, director of Chesapeake Public Libraries, and Sonal Rastogi, director of Norfolk Public Library. Ms. Scott read the proposed commending resolution to the Board:

##### ***A COMMENDING RESOLUTION OF THE LIBRARY BOARD*** *Honoring the Commonwealth's Tidewater Area Public Libraries*

*WHEREAS the citizens of the Tidewater area have the great fortune to be served by 13 outstanding library systems dedicated to meeting their information and lifelong learning needs; and*

*WHEREAS these systems formed a regional council of public libraries that includes Blackwater Regional Library, Chesapeake Public Library, Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library System; Gloucester County Public Library, Hampton Public Library, Newport News Public Library System, Norfolk Public Library, Poquoson Public Library, Portsmouth Public Library, Suffolk Public Library, Virginia Beach Public Library, Williamsburg Regional Library, and York County Public Library; and*

*WHEREAS these libraries are part of Region 3 of the Virginia Library Association, and collectively they serve more than 1.2 million patrons across 64 branches, with a total regional circulation of more than 6.8 million items during each year; and*

*WHEREAS recognizing this and wishing to facilitate residents' access to enriching activities, these library systems have collaborated on Tidewater Library Museum Day, allowing any patron who displays their library card to receive free admission to partnering museums and cultural institutions; and*

*WHEREAS these library systems offer an impressive array of programs across the region – from National Library Week Scavenger Hunt to Healthier 757, a community-wide initiative designed to improve the health and wellness of residents by promoting health literacy through an interactive digital platform; and*

*WHEREAS the Tidewater Area Public Libraries provide meaningful engagement to all in the region who connect with them in person and online; now therefore*

*BE IT RESOLVED by the Library Board on this 22nd day of April 2024 that the Library Board recognize and thank Tidewater Area Public Libraries for their exemplary commitment and service to the citizens of the Tidewater region and to the Commonwealth; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be spread upon the minutes of this meeting, and that a copy of it be given to each of these library systems as a token of the Board's gratitude and esteem.*

The chair called for a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Bryant moved; Ms. Blevins seconded. The Board approved the agenda unanimously by a roll call vote: **Ayes** – Blevins, Broadbent, Brockwell, Bryant, Canida, Murphy, Prentice, Scott, and Trumbo; **Nos** – none; **Abstentions** – none. Ms. Jackson thanked the board on behalf of Tidewater region libraries.

## V. WELCOME TO VISITORS AND STAFF

Mr. Brockwell extended a warm welcome to guests including Emily Ann Gullickson, deputy secretary for education, and Abigail Gump, counsel to the board and Assistant Attorney General. Prior to the business meeting, he shared the Board enjoyed a social coffee hour and insights from Mayor Kenneth Alexander, former Mayor Paul Fraim, and Deputy City Manager Pope. In addition, he welcomed and shared special appreciation for Sonal Rastogi and her team at Norfolk Public Library, including Jennifer George, Library Branch Services Administrator; Patricia Kendalls, who coordinated the Tucker Library tour later today. Gratitude was also extended to key Norfolk Public Library administrators, Terry Raymond from Programming Services, John Bilby from Support Services, Paris Cohorn businesses & fiscal services and Julie Rodriguez from Management Analysis. The Norfolk Public Library's warm reception was acknowledged with thanks, particularly to Vice Chair Blythe Ann Scott for her great planning and Blair Simpson from her team. From the Library of Virginia, Mr. Brockwell thanked Michelle Washington for her early assistance in the meeting planning and Tracy Molnar, who began as executive assistant to the Librarian of Virginia the previous week. Mr. Brockwell also shared gratitude for key members of Library's management team attending today: Daniel Hinderliter, John Metz, Nan Carmack, and Sarah Falls, and Mike Ezepek for IT support. Finally, he shared his welcome to both Pia Trigiani and Scott Dodson from the Library of Virginia Foundation. Mr. Brockwell thanked all Library of Virginia staff for their hard work and each Board member for their attendance and engagement, with a special welcome Bo Trumbo, who was attending his first meeting since appointment.

## VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Brockwell opened the meeting to public comments. Hearing none, the Board moved on to the next item in the agenda.

## VII. INFORMATION ITEMS

### A. Reports from Other Organizations:

1. **Friends of the Virginia State Archives:** Mr. Broadbent provided a brief report on behalf of Mr. Conley Edwards, a former state archivist and president of the Friends of Virginia State Archives. The annual Straight to the Source program occurred Friday, March 15, 2024, at the Library of Virginia. In collaboration with the Library of Virginia, the Friends of the Virginia State Archives will present their annual Spring Conference featuring presentations by the Library's staff on its collections. Staff members will share their vast knowledge of several of the Library's

databases and projects. This conference will cover updates from the Virginia Untold Project, the Virginia Newspaper Project, using the Library catalog and Ancestry.com. Looking ahead, the Friends are preparing for the next program to be held on Saturday October 5th. Craig Scott, President and CEO of Heritage Books and a professional researcher for almost 40 years, will focus his presentation on military records. This will be the 24th annual Richard Slatten lecture known for bringing national recognized speakers to the Library. The Friends expressed gratitude to Suffolk resident Sharon Ray Gable, author of more than 20 books on Norfolk County records and northeastern North Carolina records, who donates the royalties from her book sales to support the Friends.

## **B. Committee/Division Reports**

- **Education, Outreach, and Research Services Committee:** Dr. Canida, committee chair, welcomed Sarah Falls as the new director of public services and outreach. He reported that nearly 3,000 people have visited the Indigenous Perspectives exhibition since its opening. Special appreciation was expressed to members of the Education and Outreach team: Mari Julienne, who created and maintains the exhibition's webpage, and Ashley Craig, who wrote an article and developed programming around the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Racial Integrity Act. Several free public programs, to include LVA On the Go, will expand on the themes of the Indigenous Perspectives exhibit. To date, the team has conducted 16 guided tours for more than 231 people. Current team members John Dill, Mari Julienne, along with retired LVA staff member Brent Tarter authored *Justice for Ourselves: Black Virginians Claim Their Freedom After Slavery*. The Library also launched the 2024 Weinstein Author series on March 6th to a full house and overflow room with authors Rachel Beanland and Meredith Henne Baker discussing their research and writing about the Richmond Theater Fire. On April 18, Senator Tim Kaine was scheduled to discuss his book *Walk, Ride, Paddle*, and the event was postponed. LVA On the Go has been very busy with 20 regional events scheduled. The Marketing and Communications team have effectively shared the Library's story with 51 news stories published this quarter. Social media presence has maintained steady growth in followers and overall engagement. On behalf of the Education and Outreach Services Committee, Dr. Canida expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Library team for their impactful contributions to our beloved Commonwealth. Mr. Brockwell noted the rescheduled event with Senator Kaine would be May 2, 2024 at 6 p.m.

- **Archival Collections & Records Management Services Committee:** Dr. Metz reported the Archives, Collections, and Records Management Services Committee met via Zoom on April 16 at 2 p.m. The committee received an update on the Library's partnership with Ancestry.com. Digitization of all collections included in the first year of the agreement with Ancestry is nearing completion, and Kathy Jordan is currently in discussion with Ancestry regarding collections for the second year of the agreement. Dr. Metz reported that digitization of the World War II Separation Notices (80 boxes of records for a total of 525,580 images for 252,900 veterans) is complete. The Library has held several transcription events highlighting the Separation Notices, and they look forward to more, including at the Virginia War Memorial's Hill of Heroes event on June 29. The Circuit Court Records Preservation Program Grant Review Board met February 13, 2024 to evaluate 124 grant requests from 102 circuit courts across the Commonwealth, the largest number of localities to ever participate in the program. The review board approved 122 projects totaling \$3.2 million. Most of the approved applications covered professional conservation treatment for more than 600 records that date from the 1690s to the mid-20th century. The remaining projects funded record reformatting, indexing, shelving, and climate control equipment. The Library is now sending 2,000 reels every other month to identify diseased microfilm and create duplicate microfilm as needed. Currently, 70% of the reels are being replaced with new reels. Additionally, Dr. Metz reported the Virginia Commission to commemorate the 250th of the American Revolution has expressed interest in the Library's "Ideas in Action: Virginians Petition Their Government, 1776-1786" project proposal, an approval and funding decision has been delayed until the biennial budget has been settled by the General Assembly and is signed by the Governor. Finally, Dr. Metz shared repairs at the State Records Center chiller and blast freezer are complete. The expansion project remains on hold pending review and authorization of the project to enter the bidding phase, which is not expected until the budget is approved by the General Assembly and the Governor's office. Once fully authorized, it will take around four months before a groundbreaking can be scheduled.
- **Legislative and Finance Committee:** Mr. Bryant reported that budget spending is on track. As of March 31, 2024, the financial status of the Library is in accordance with the Appropriations Act and reflects the intentions of the General Assembly.

- **Public Library Development Committee:** Ms. Scott shared that the committee distribute a staff update in lieu of meeting. Dr. Carmack highlighted the division staff’s frequent travels across the state in support of their mission. She also shared an early list of potential state aid waiver requests that will come before the Board in June.
- **Library of Virginia Foundation:** Scott Dodson, executive director, and Pia Trigiani, board president, noted in the third quarter of FY 2024, revenue reached \$1.37 million, and exceeded budget expectations. The recent opening of the Virginia Shop in the Capitol, and the new shop manager have created high expectations for continued revenue growth at both shop locations. The endowment has grown to \$5.4 million, which includes new gifts valued over \$190,000 bolstered by recent gifts that included \$52,000 dollars for the Sandy Treadway Third Century Fund. In November, the Foundation contracted with CCS to consult on and evaluate capacity for a fundraising campaign. More than 50 people were interviewed to assess the viability of a campaign aimed at funding various programs, roles and renovations to LVA’s physical spaces. The survey garnered an overwhelmingly positive response. The next five years could be transformative for the Foundation’s operations and how it supports the Library’s mission. Mr. Brockwell expressed gratitude to the Foundation for its report and took a moment to thank Norfolk native Wendy Auerbach for joining the Board meeting. Ms. Auerbach serves on the Foundation Board and recently published *To Life: The Past is Present: Holocaust Stories of Hampton Roads Survivors, Liberators, and Rescuers*. Her book is available for purchase at the Virginia Shop.
- **Nominating Committee:** Ms. Scott reported a proposed slate of officers and Executive Committee members from the Nominating Committee. The Board will vote on these nominations at the June meeting. The committee reported the following nominations:
  - a. Chair – Mr. Brockwell
  - b. Vice Chair - Ms. Blevins
  - c. Executive Committee – Mr. Brockwell, Mr. Bryant, Ms. Blevins, Ms. Scott, Mr. Broadbent, and Dr. Canida.

### C. Report of the Librarian of Virginia

Marking his third month in the role, Mr. Clark thanked everyone for the warm welcome and smooth transition. He reported that the Library building experienced heightened activity during the General Assembly session, hosting many events for the benefit of

delegates and senators. This created an excellent opportunity for him to engage with some of the Library's influential stakeholders. The Indigenous Perspectives exhibit will continue through August, and Mr. Clark highlighted the success of LVA's marketing campaign for the exhibit, evidenced by the high level of interest and enthusiasm from the public for programs designed around the exhibition.

Mr. Clark shared his optimism for the Library's financial future. He noted that the Library has a place holder in the Capital Plan from the Governor's Office to support the schematic design phase for the Library's renovations. If it survives the next round of budget negotiations, new funding could be released early in the fiscal year.

Mr. Clark highlighted the Library's recent new hires. Sarah Falls has assumed the role of Director of Public Services and Public Outreach Division. She joins the Library from the University of Carolina School of the Arts, where she was the University Librarian. Tracy Molnar, the Librarian's new executive assistant, recently joined from the Department of Labor and Industry, bringing extensive federal experience particularly in administration, procurement, and project management. To enhance administrative efficiency, Mr. Clark has enacted some internal changes. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) consists of his direct reports and meets weekly. Additionally, a newly created Library Management Team convenes monthly with its own specific responsibilities. Both teams operate independently and cooperatively. In further operational news, the Library has rejoined the Coalition for Network Information (CNI) part of the Association of Research Libraries. Notable members include VCU, Virginia Tech, William & Mary, the Library of Congress, the Mellon Foundation and Los Alamos Laboratories. CNI serves as a forum for research institutions to discuss how to adapt to meet the evolving needs of researchers. Mr. Clark and IT Director Paul Casalaspí attended the spring meeting in California where much of the focus was on AI and its implications for educational and research institutions.

During his first three months, Mr. Clark has actively engaged with stakeholders in Richmond and beyond. In March, he participated in the Virginia Public Library Directors Association in Harrisonburg followed by the State Council of Higher Education Library Advisory Committee Meeting in Charlottesville. Additionally, he attended the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) gathering in Washington DC.

Two major initiatives are on his agenda: firstly, the Library is embarking on the development of a new strategic framework to guide efforts. He is in the process of engaging a consultant through VCU's Performance Management Group to facilitate the process with input from stakeholders including the Board, Library staff, the Foundation, and library users. The process will be inclusive and aim to conclude before the end of summer. As part of this process, Mr. Clark has paused hiring to maintain flexibility as the plan develops new initiatives, reinforces current ones and perhaps cancel others. More details will be shared at the June annual meeting. The second initiative is around the

potential future renovation of the Library. There is an opportunity to create a new excitement and develop new audiences, and central to this idea is the creation of a permanent gallery for the Library's most significant documents, akin to the National Archives, both preserving and showcasing original documents essential to Virginia's history. Mr. Clark expects recommendation by September from a special task force of staff working to realize this vision while ensuring preservation and security as well as the creation of a civic, school and family spaces inside the Library.

#### **D. Report of the Chair**

Mr. Brockwell reported that Mr. Clark has hit the ground running since joining the Library. He is representing the Library on the Virginia on the Commission to commemorate the 250th of the American Revolution, and the commission has reviewed favorably the Library staff's proposal for a major digital humanities contribution to the multi-year celebration. He has initiated an inclusive process for the development of a new strategic framework and facilitated productive conversations on Library's web strategy and governance. The Library's website is its second most important property since many Virginians may never visit Richmond but will know the Library through its online presence. As referenced in his report, Mr. Clark has been very busy meeting key stakeholders across the state.

Last week, Mr. Clark and the Library Management Team (LMT) led an extensive orientation session for two new Board members: Mr. Trumbo and Dr. Prentice.

Mr. Brockwell shared he is scheduling time to review nominations for the Patron of Letters degree with the Librarian and subcommittee, and that he hopes all Board members can attend the Literary Awards on September 21, 2024. Hosted by the Foundation, it is always a wonderful event. Recently, the Foundation assumed the management for judging nominations, resulting in streamlined planning and preparations under Mary Jordans leadership. He echoed his appreciation that the Weinstein Series continues to draw strong crowds. Mr. Brockwell attended the kickoff event focusing on the Richmond Theatre Fire.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no old or new additional business before the Board, Mr. Brockwell adjourned the meeting at 11:38 a.m. He thanked all for their attendance and engagement. He also encouraged everyone present to enjoy the informational tours organized of two of Norfolk Public Library's branches along with the lunch. The Board's Annual Meeting and Appreciation Lunch will be June 24, 2024 in Richmond.