

19 April 2019

**TO: RAILS Board of Directors**

**FROM: Deirdre Brennan**

**SUBJECT: Notes from the Universal Service Committee meeting**

Board members, the information that follows consists of my notes from the meeting. These are not the official minutes. I took particular note of activities that RAILS staff should undertake or investigate – these sections are highlighted.

Notes from the universal service committee meeting March 21, 2019

Committee members:

Carole Medal, Gail Borden Public Library District

Lynn Stainbrook, Rockford Public Library

Larissa Good, Warren County Public Library

Dee Runnels, RAILS Board, trustee at Moline Public Library

Dave Barry, RAILS Board, trustee at Bartlett Public Library

Sue Busenbark, RAILS Board, trustee at Kewanee Public Library (Committee chair)

Dee Brennan

Jane Plass

Joe Filapek

Review of RAILS plan and views of members

The group reviewed the RAILS plan and members provided their own opinions and insights. Carole Medal provided a passionate and articulate explanation of suburban problems. Their district is “swiss cheese.” Many years ago, the board (after trying many back door referenda) decided to annex all areas that were undeveloped, ie had no houses.

Equity is a huge issue. For taxpayers who pay for library service, they do not want others getting it for free or more cheaply. Anti tax sentiment is strong and very difficult to combat.

**Dave Barry cited the need to define the problem(s). rural vs suburban**

**The committee asked for information on what has been accomplished in the plan, what hasn't, and why not.**

**There was agreement that we need a list of the different reasons why people are unserved and data on where they are, demographics, etc.**

There was discussion of the possibility of the state library issuing card for unserved residents. Greg said this is “not off the table.”

Lynn – if we were to file legislation for funding of unserved service, would there be any chance of success? Can Greg McCormick talk to the SOS and his staff about this possibility?

Lynn – maybe permissive legislation in terms of applying or modifying existence of pieces of the law?

There was discussion of ability now to pay for card on quarterly or semi annually. When did this happen? Was it announced?

Dee said the reports from past discussions cited the focus should be on basic or minimum service not equal service. This seems like an important point to keep in mind.

There was lots of discussion about realtors and the Multiple Listing Service and making it clear on these forms what houses get library service when they are for sale. We should partner with other organizations and agencies like Park Districts to get this done. It could help at least to inform buyers when moving into an area. Also, change the law for when property changes hands and add it to title insurance that they will be paying for library service going forward.

**We need a complete list of what is being done by libraries to serve the unserved.**

Gail Borden does not allow people to buy cards if they are contiguous to the district. They must annex. No one has declined. The library does the legal work, forms, etc., on this.

There was group discussion of use of digital resources to solve this problem and bookmobiles on the other end of the spectrum. Digital resources were not thought of when previous studies were done. Biblioboards and E-Read Illinois help in this way. However, some people don't have good internet access, or computers and some just want to visit a physical place (story hours, social interaction, etc)

Maybe a system card. This used to be done, according to Jane.

**We need to do lots of marketing about what libraries do, why they are important.**

Perhaps the counties could assess taxes to fund service expansion?

What is the role of community colleges?

**What is in the statute and what is in the code?**