

RAILS UNIVERSAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, November 26, 2019 | 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Ms. Susan Busenbark, Chair of Universal Service Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.

2. Roll Call of RAILS Universal Service Committee Members

Ms. Anna Duff called the roll of the committee members:

Burr Ridge: Susan Busenbark, Catherine Yanikowski

Zoom: Dave Barry, Carole Medal, Larisa Good, Dee Runnels

3. Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Yanikowski moved for the adoption of the agenda, Mr. Barry seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

4. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Burr Ridge: Deirdre Brennan, Anna Duff, Joseph Filapek, Grant Halter, and Mary Witt

Illinois State Library: Gwen Harrison and Greg McCormick

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. Welcome New Member Catherine Yanikoski

Ms. Busenbark welcomed new RAILS Universal Service Committee member, Catherine Yanikoski. Ms. Yanikoski expressed her great enthusiasm for joining the committee.

7. Approval of RAILS Universal Service Minutes for March 21, 2019

Ms. Medal moved for the approval of the RAILS Universal Service Minutes for March 21, 2019, Mr. Barry seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

8. Committee Direction from Last Meeting

A. Multiple Listing Service – Add information on public library access to MLS house sales information sheet

Ms. Brennan reported that the Real Estate Multiple Listing Service was a major topic at the previous meeting. People purchasing houses are provided a great amount of information from the listing sheet. The Committee thought that sheet would be a great place to add information on library services so people would know if a home is located in a served area or not. Ms. Brennan relayed that she has found some difficulty getting her message across to realtors. Ms. Medal offered that simply

getting the library added on the sheet as a category, even with no additional information available, would work to call people's attention to the possibility of not being a served area. Ms. Runnels' suggested the route of contacting Bar Associations, which Ms. Brennan agreed could be an avenue worthwhile exploring.

B. RAILS Website changes to make information on the unserved more accessible

RAILS is in the midst of making changes to their website in order to make information on the unserved more readily available to members.

C. Letter from Greg McCormick explaining why residents are unserved

There were no questions regarding the letter from Mr. McCormick.

D. Survey of libraries on services to unserved: review and analysis

Ms. Witt presented her analysis of the survey on the unserved. She reported there were many more comments than those included in the written analysis and those chosen were selected based on their representation of the most popular topics of responses. Out of 412 RAILS member public libraries, 238 responses were received. Some key issues that arose were the need for assistance with entering intergovernmental agreements and the alleviation of confusion around vaguely worded library laws. Survey results revealed that while some libraries may unknowingly be carrying out practices not within the law, others are refraining from allowed practices due to uncertainty about their legality. Perhaps, some of the ongoing practices libraries have been using could be included in the laws. Mr. McCormick stated that he found the survey results interesting and recreating the FAQ to get all that information out to everyone will be a definite step in the right direction. Ms. Brennan pointed out that many libraries seek clear cut definitions but that is not how the laws are written. Mr. Barry suggested that the openness of the laws could be a good thing, allowing for libraries to experiment with what works for them. Also, in writing them, one could never come up with the wide variety of unique issues each library faces.

E. Data analysis dashboard and the unserved

Mr. Halter presented the categorized responses of the seventy-six question survey about the unserved. Ms. Brennan brought to attention the topic of temporary library cards. The survey showed that many libraries have been issuing temporary library cards, such as student cards and teacher cards, in order to extend services. Should the Committee work towards trying to make these practices legal? Ms. Medal pointed out that maintaining equity has been an obstacle but expanding the law to give more options and leaving a lot of local control in place could work. Ms. Yanikowski brought to attention the idea of reciprocal borrowing between students of a RAILS school library and RAILS public library. Ms. Brennan shared that she

notices some similarity between the topic of library cards and that of library fines. Some libraries have been successful in eliminating children's fines rather than all fines. Perhaps one way of expanding service would be giving cards to unserved children. Ms. Yanikowski added the possibility of using a tax bill formula based on the entire RAILS region. Ms. Brennan concluded that RAILS staff will look at next steps. Ms. Medal voiced her opinion that these are encouragingly realistic goals. Since she does not foresee the whole state being taxed, she believes that coming up with alternative, innovative and incremental ideas is very good. Mr. McCormick thought all the ideas were interesting and worth looking into, and support the importance of libraries as part of the overall educational system.

9. **Other RAILS Projects** – Deirdre Brennan

A. **October RAILS Member Update discussion on unserved**

Ms. Brennan reported that the topic of the unserved seemed to hit a nerve with many at the last RAILS Member Update. It was discovered that not everyone knew patrons could pay for library cards in installments. “Commonality of Community Interests” was another topic which arose. Mr. Filapek pointed out that the question of commonality of community interests is often not a money issue but a location one. Which library to choose is not always clear when there are multiple libraries in a district.

B. **FAQ on unserved**

The topic of the FAQ was thought to be sufficiently covered while discussing item 8.D. on the agenda.

C. **Statewide database access proposal**

Ms. Brennan reported that state funded basic database access being added to the Illinois budget was discussed by the ILA Public Policy Committee and the Advocacy Committee. The ILALA board also supported this important step for all libraries, which would put Illinois in line with other states. Having basic database access funded by the state would free up local library dollars to spend elsewhere, like on services and implementation of the minimum wage increase. The databases would also be made available to the unserved. Regarding the question of which databases will be chosen, she relayed that there have already been over 500 replies from libraries across the state, informing which databases would work best for them. Mr. Barry said this statewide database access would be fantastic.

D. **Draft legislation to amend public library district act to remove barriers to library mergers**

Ms. Brennan presented information on the draft legislation for Article 22 of the Public Library District Act of 1991. This legislation has been through a number of

reiterations. Mr. Barry inquired how this consolidation will help the unserved. Ms. Brennan explained that when two libraries join together, the unserved residents living between them can be incorporated into the library district as long as people vote accordingly. This legislation would make the process for non-district public libraries wishing to merge much easier by eliminating the step of making it a district library before merging.

E. Census 2020 and the unserved

Ms. Brennan announced that RAILS received a \$750,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services to aid with the Census 2020 Count. She pointed out that the Census Count is an important issue for all of us since the results determine federal funds to states and representation in Washington D.C. Historically, libraries have been involved in the census since the public library is where people turn when they need help. It is an online census so people go to libraries to access computers in order to fill it out. Aurora, Joliet and many other libraries are partnering with RAILS to help with the Census this year.

F. Baker and Taylor Pop Up Library product

The Pop Up Library is able to be accessed via cell phone and works off a hotspot. The site contains preloaded e-books. The Pop Up Library can be utilized in doctor offices, YMCAs, and other public places to encourage library use among the unserved.

G. Joliet Public Library project

Ms. Yanikowski spoke about Little Free Libraries established in unserved areas of Joliet. Ms. Yanikowski explained that the libraries' placements were decided by overlapping a map of unincorporated area with school district area to pinpoint locations that would most likely have children and families wishing to use it. Every institution she spoke to was delighted by the idea of hosting a library. Volunteers fill the libraries and keep them going. Ms. Yanikowski added that the Little Free Libraries are also used to promote Joliet public library programs. The biggest success has been that these books are being taken and people are bringing them back.

10. Next Steps

Ms. Brennan concluded that RAILS will continue to analyze the unserved survey and look into temporary cards, children's cards, and different tax formula options for determining the cost of library cards.

11. Future Meetings and Agenda items

12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.