

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, July 24, 2020 | 1:00 PM

MINUTES**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Paul Mills, President of the RAILS Board welcomed attendees and called the RAILS board meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, July 24, 2020. He stated that in accordance with the Government Emergency Administrative Act PA100-0640, the RAILS Board of Directors finds an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent and believes it is in the best interest of RAILS to hold a virtual meeting to perform essential business.

2. ROLL CALL OF RAILS BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Fister called the roll of the RAILS Board members:

Via Zoom videoconference: Sue Busenbark, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Dianne Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina

RAILS Burr Ridge: Paul Mills, Michael Campbell

Absent: none.

3. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Fister read the names of the guests attending via zoom:

RAILS Staff via zoom: Deirdre Brennan, Monica Harris, Jim Kregor, Mark Hatch, Anne Slaughter, Mary Witt, Joe Filapek, Dan Bostrom, Ryan Hebel, Jody Rubel, Anna Duff, Emily Fister

Guests via zoom: Greg McCormick, Illinois State Library

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – Paul Mills

There were no public comments.

5. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Ms. McHone -Chase moved for the adoption of the agenda. Ms. Hollister seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Dianne Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina

6. OATH OF OFFICE AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS**6.1 Newly Elected Board Members - Oath of Office**

Mr. Mills asked the newly elected Board Members to stand and recite the Oath of Office. He thanked them for their willingness to serve and welcomed them to the RAILS board.

6.2 Election of Officers

Mr. Mills presented the slate of officers recommended by the nominating committee: Michael Campbell, President; Thomas Stagg, Vice President; Sarah McHone-Chase, Secretary; Dianne Hollister, Treasurer. The floor was opened to nominations, none were offered. Ms. Nemec-Loise moved for approval of the slate of officers as presented. Mr. Pointon seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Dianne Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills,

Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: none

Mr. Mills said he enjoyed his time as the RAILS Board President and it was a pleasure to work with a great board and staff. Mr. Campbell presided over the remainder of the meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF RAILS BOARD MINUTES, FINANCIAL REPORTS AND EXPENDITURES

7.1 RAILS Board Minutes of June 19, 2020 Regular Meeting

Mr. Mills moved for the approval of the minutes of the June 19, 2020 regular board meeting. Ms. Hollister seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Dianne Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: none

7.2 RAILS Financial Report

Mr. Kregor gave the financial report for the period ending June 30, 2020. He stated the reports were not audited and the final reports will be presented at the September meeting. The June 30, 2020 unassigned General Fund (\$13.4 million) cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 14.3 months of operations. Cash and investment balances decreased \$1.1 million during June as RAILS has received no Area and Per Capita (APC) grant payments since January, though the entire balance of the FY2019 APC award has been received. Total General Fund revenues were \$3,393,734 below budget primarily from lower APC Grant revenues (\$3,217,500), timing of remaining future FY2020 APC payments (\$6,435,000) is uncertain, in light of the financial stress to the State caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Investment Income for July 2019 was \$38,259, but by June 2020 monthly income had declined to \$7,249 due primarily to declining interest rates.

7.3 Approval of Expenditures – June, 2020

Mr. Kregor presented the expenditures report for the period ending June 30, 2020. Mr. Pointon moved for the adoption of the agenda. Mr. Vancina seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Dianne Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: none

8. REPORTS

8.1 Report from the RAILS President

There was no report.

8.2 RAILS Board Committee Reports-Committee Chairs

8.2.1 Advocacy Committee

Mr. Campbell reported the committee met this week and is concentrating on the importance of school library advocacy and the impact that the pandemic has had on the school librarians. RAILS is working with AISLE and the State Board of Education. Mr. Campbell, Ms. Brennan and Ms. Nemec-Loise met will continue to meet with members of AISLE to enhance efforts on behalf of school libraries. A school library

advocacy session has been approved for the next ILA conference as well.

8.2.2 Consortia Committee

The committee did not meet, but RAILS has had meetings with the consortia managers regarding delivery and status of libraries.

8.2.3 Executive Committee

The committee has not met.

8.2.4 Policy Committee

The committee has not met.

8.2.5 Resource Sharing Committee

The committee has not met.

8.2.6 Universal Service Committee

Ms. Busenbark reported that the committee is continuing its efforts to advocate for the changes to library laws for the unserved and supporting legislation such as the Library Cards for Kids Act.

8.3 RAILS Reports

8.3.1 RAILS Monthly Report

Ms. Brennan welcomed new board members and provided highlights of the report. She shared that resource sharing is again active and about eighty percent of libraries have resumed delivery. The volume is still low but is expected to increase. There is a link on the Pulse page from the RAILS website that shows survey results on the services that libraries are providing. Ms. Brennan also explained that advocacy will be a big focus. An article about school libraries is included in the report and there is reason for concern for school librarians whose situation in terms of funding has worsened with the pandemic. The RAILS Member Update saw about four hundred attendees, and included a presentation by OCLC/REALM Project Director Sharon Streams. Ms. Brennan announced that the RAILS budget and plan of service was approved by the State Library.

8.4 Illinois State Library Report- ISL Staff

Mr. McCormick extended greetings from Secretary White and everyone at the Illinois State Library and welcomed all new board members. He reiterated that the System Area Per Capita Grant for RAILS and the other two library systems was approved. The State Library has moved forward with attempting to issue the initial payments owed to RAILS for FY21 with a portion of the amount forthcoming in a matter of days. He announced that the grants for the Statewide Talking Book and Braille Service, the Project Next Generation, the grant for the delivery service through CARLI (which RAILS has a direct role in facilitating) and the second year of L2 funding were all approved. Mr. Joe Natale, Illinois State Library Chief Deputy Director, spoke to RAILS yesterday regarding initial stages of crafting administration rules for nonresident services, specifically the Library Cards for Kids Act that was passed in Public Act 1010632. They also discussed addressing legislation that has been in place for several years regarding disabled veterans and exemptions from taxation. Based upon the level of disability of the veteran, they are not required to pay local real estate taxes therefore they should not be paying a nonresident fee for library services. . As far as the Library Cards for Kids Act, he reported there is work to be done and they will have to work closely with library systems. The Illinois State Library will be scheduling meetings

with the regional library systems and appropriate staff from each to get that work completed. The Library system annual report guidelines are being reviewed to make certain that everything asked for in the past is necessary today. Mr. McCormick sits on that committee for the search for the new Illinois Poet Laureate. He encouraged anyone who is an advocate and fan of poetry to visit the governor's website to see how the selection process will take place. The deadline is August 16. School libraries will be an ongoing area of concern and the Illinois State Library is communicating with AISLE. Mr. McCormick pointed out that yesterday the Illinois State Board of Education released another document regarding the Fall 2020 learning recommendations, including media centers and how library materials might be provided to students.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Revised compensation structure

Ms. Brennan asked Board members to approve the revised compensation structure which will be effective July 1, 2020. She said the last time RAILS did this was in 2015-16. RAILS used HR Source to do a benchmarking project that began in January and entailed upgrading job descriptions. On the advice of HR Source, RAILS has been making updates each year to keep in line with the Consumer Price Index. Ms. Brennan stated that there were a few positions below the minimum of the assigned grade, but not by much. RAILS will increase those salaries to get them within range. This rectification will have little impact on the overall budget. She added that it is very important to keep good salaries in order to attract and keep the kind of staff team we want. RAILS has been in the practice of giving a 3% raise across the board in past years. Ms. Brennan said those raises will not be added to the budget until there is more certainty about the budget. There were questions about the raises being immediate or retroactive once approved. Ms. Brennan replied that it would be the decision of the RAILS Board. Ms. Cox moved for the approval of the revised compensation structure. Ms. McHone-Chase seconded and roll call was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Diane Hollister, Kris Kenney Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemecek, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: None

9.2 Board Committee Assignments

Ms. Brennan announced that RAILS has a number of vacancies on the committees due to board members going off and other board members taking new roles. The president appoints the committee members. Ms. Brennan announced that there are two vacancies on the Policy Committee. She is uncertain what work there will be for them this year since the employment handbook was just finished this year. The Resource Sharing Committee has been chaired by Ms. Charm Ruhnke. Ms. Brennan said Ms. Ruhnke's term expires but she thinks Ms. Ruhnke would be happy to be reappointed. Diane Hollister has been serving on this Committee and there is one vacancy for a second Board member. Ms. Brennan said the Universal Services Committee needs two representatives. There is also the need for a FOIA Officer and an Ethics Officer. She asked Board members to email their interests to her and Ms. Fister. Responses will be consolidated and sent to Mr. Campbell. In response to a question regarding these roles of FOIA and Ethics Officers, Ms. Brennan explained that any FOIA request would be sent to the FOIA Officer and the Ethics Officer would be responsible

for ensuring the ethics ordinance is adhered to. Ms. Fister added that the FOIA Officer and OMA Officer are required to complete training every year.

9.3 Filling of Academic Library seat

Ms. Brennan reported that there are a couple options for how to fill the Academic Library seat vacated by Gwen Gregory, who took a new job at Northern Illinois University where current board member Sarah McHone-Chase is employed. According to state law and RAILS bylaws, Ms. Gregory is no longer eligible to serve on the board. Ms. Brennan said in the past we have asked the next highest vote getter to take the position, however, there was no other candidate for this seat. Ms. Brennan said another option is to ask for candidates via RAILS E-News, then having the Executive Committee interview people and appoint someone, with RAILS Board approval. Another possibility would be to hold an election, which would be time consuming, requiring a nominating committee and getting the word out. Ms. McHone-Chase suggested it might be best to avoid an election right now. Ms. Nemec-Loise, who was appointed in that manner, said she enjoyed the Executive Committee interview process because she was able to express her interest in the position and why she thought she would be a good fit for it. Ms. Brennan said the process only took about a month. Ms. Spratford added that one benefit of this method is identifying possible candidates for other or future roles as well. Mr. Mills moved for the approval of filling the Academic Library seat by means of Executive Committee appointment. Diane Hollister seconded and roll call was taken:

Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Diane Hollister, Kris Kenney Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Teppen, Alex Vancina; Nays: None

9.4 “My Library Is...” Plan FY 2021

Ms. Brennan said RAILS launched the My Library Is... website about a year ago. She said RAILS focused on school libraries this year and plans to do that for year two also. Ms. Brennan stated that everybody can be an advocate for school libraries, not just directors or trustees. She expressed her enthusiasm about the closer relationship RAILS has developed with the AISLE; the monthly meetings with their leadership team have helped RAILS better understand their issues and how to better support them. RAILS worked with ILA on their “Bigger than a Building campaign” and has worked very closely on this advocacy issue in order to leverage our efforts and avoid duplication. Ms. Witt mentioned that the My Library Is... campaign was based heavily on member feedback during the first year and she plans to continue in that fashion moving forward. She explained that the written plan is not static and asked if any board members had any feedback. Ms. Nemec-Loise shared that she is working with AISLE leaders to create an AISLE webinar called Top Ten Things You Can Do Today to Advocate for Your School Library Program and she suggested that they submit a story to the My Library Is... campaign for that webinar. Ms. Witt welcomed that news and stated that the more we can do via partnership the better. Ms. Brennan suggested that Mr. Harris share the goals of the ILA Trustee Forum for the benefit of the RAILS program at ILA which will be about school libraries and trustees working together. Ms. Brennan concluded that advocacy is going to be an important part of RAILS undertakings this year.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

10.1 RAILS Board meeting schedule for FY 2021—Ms. Brennan said according to the revised OMA, it is required that either the Executive Officer, President, or board member be physically present in the organization building for Board meetings. She plans to be present at Burr Ridge and welcomed Board members to attend so long as they understand they must wear masks and socially distance. She relayed that RAILS staff have been given the option to work from home so Board members are also given that option but that is their choice. Mr. Campbell stated that due to the pandemic we have not planned any travels to different locations. He said if members want to attend at the Burr Ridge offices, they should get in touch with Ms. Fister and Ms. Brennan. Ms. Fister stated that if members are attending at a public building, for instance their library, the agenda and locations must be posted 48 hours before the meeting. Mr. Hatch has done staging for the main meeting room in Burr Ridge and showed the illustrated meeting room capacity. Mr. Pointon moved for approval of the RAILS Board meeting schedule for FY 2021. Ms. Busenbark seconded and roll call was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Diane Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: None

10.2 Executive Director Goals FY 2021

Ms. Brennan presented her goals and pointed out that they coincide with the strategic goals for RAILS. She included less than her thirteen goals of last year since some goals turned into regular operations and are worked on continuously. Ms. Brennan announced that the goals presented need not be approved today but can be and opened the floor for discussion. In response to a question, Ms. Brennan specified that RAILS delivery services are incorporated under resource sharing. She went on to say resource sharing also encompasses Find More Illinois, Explore More Illinois, and Simply E. Lastly, she pointed out that goal number eight is about enlarging resource sharing. Ms. Nemec-Loise moved for approval of the Executive Director's goals for FY21. Ms. Kenney seconded and roll call was taken: Ayes: Sue Busenbark, Michael Campbell, Halle Cox, Percy Harris, Diane Hollister, Kris Kenney, Sarah McHone-Chase, Paul Mills, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Scott Pointon, Becky Spratford, Thomas Stagg, Beth Tepen, Alex Vancina; Nays: None

10.3 RAILS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and social responsibility discussion

Ms. Brennan shared a draft statement that she and RAILS staff wrote about systemic racism and bias. Under goal four of the Strategic plan, providing libraries support for the future it was very intentional to add the vital role that libraries of all types play in building a civil and engaged society. She said unfortunately the events of the past few months have made it even more important that we provide libraries with this type of support. She said RAILS identified an EDI consultant, Ms. Elisabeth (Biz) Lindsay-Ryan, to train staff members. Ms. Harris and Mr. Filapek are leading this initiative at RAILS. Ms. Lindsay-Ryan suggested that they could also include a cohort of libraries. Ms. Brennan said RAILS is figuring out the timeline to do all this and there is money in the budget for it. She stated that it will be a huge ongoing project. Ms. Harris said RAILS is taking a multiple prong approach that will start with Ms. Lindsey-Ryan attending the next RAILS staff meeting. From there a climate team of eight to ten people from the RAILS staff will be assembled. In addition to the team, RAILS staff will receive EDI training. RAILS would also like to bring this training to libraries

that might not have access to this training otherwise. Ms. Spratford stated that she is a national expert on this topic and feels very strongly that providing this support to libraries at the system level at no cost or low cost is very important. Ms. Hollister suggested a board EDI committee and the board members agreed. RAILS will draft a charge for Board members to review. Ms. Nemeć-Loise suggested that the term “diversity” should be broad and well-articulated. Ms. Brennan added that there is an EDI email list that people can join as well, Ms. Brennan brought up the topic of RAILS Board Member mentors and said RAILS could facilitate that but it is really up to the individual board members. Ms. Hollister said that having a mentor when she first started was very helpful. Mr. Mills volunteered and said he would be happy to help.

Mr. Campbell asked if anyone had library news to share. He shared that the Fox River Grove library would be opening this upcoming Wednesday. Ms. McHone-Chase said NIU is discussing the possibility of allowing a hundred people at a time in her library. Ms. Spratford said that the Lagrange library is moving from appointments only to no appointments necessary. Mr. Vancina relayed that New Lenox library has been open for walk-ins for a couple weeks and it has gone well so far. Mr. Stagg said the Alpha Park library opened on Monday and still offers curbside pickup the first hour of every morning for patrons. Mr. Pointon said White Oak library is almost back to the two thirds of normality when it comes to checking out materials. Ms. Nemeć-Loise said North Shore Country Day school is proceeding with caution with their opening plan. They are planning on a modified schedule hybrid model. She said they have also been putting together resources for school librarians to claim their seat at the table. Ms. Hollister said summer reading went well in Bloomington.

11. AGENDA BUILDING FOR THE NEXT RAILS BOARD MEETING

Mr. Campbell announced the next RAILS Board will be held on Friday, August 28 at 1:00 p.m. RAILS will review the draft charge for the EDI committee, and discuss board committee mentors.

12. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.