

VIRTUAL MEETING
RAILS BOARD EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE MEETING

December 2, 2020 | 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Ms. Hollister, EDI chairperson, greeted members and called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Hollister read the following: 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.

Ms. Palmisano called the roll of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee.

Committee members in attendance via Zoom: Megan Ballengee, Victoria Blackmer, Michael Campbell, Cristina Bueno, Rosie Camargo (arrived at 2:30 p.m.), Edith Craig, Nate Gass, Dianne Hollister, Emily Kiang, Steve Koebel, Shekina Lawrence, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemece-Loise, Micelle Nielsen Ott, Kristen Rademacher (left at 2:51 p.m.), Andrea Robinson (arrived at 2:12 p.m.), Becky Spratford, Sarah Steiger, Anna Wassernaar, Leah White (left at 2:58 p.m.)

Absent: Amber Hayes, Leora Siegel

2. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in attendance via Zoom: Deirdre Brennan, Joe Filapek, Stacy Palmisano, Emily Fister, Ryan Hebel, Karen Goyer, Biz Lindsay-Ryan, Kathy Dejnowski, Thomas Stagg, Pam Kamin

Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Victoria Blackmer moved, and Michael Campbell seconded, that

THE RAILS BOARD EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE AGENDA BE ADOPTED

The motion carried. Roll call was taken: Ayes: Megan Ballengee, Victoria Blackmer, Michael Campbell, Cristina Bueno, Edith Craig, Nate Gass, Dianne Hollister, Emily Kiang, Steve Koebel, Shekina Lawrence, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemece-Loise, Micelle Nielsen Ott, Kristen Rademacher, Becky Spratford, Sarah Steiger, Anna Wassernaar, Leah White. Nays: none

5. Welcome

Ms. Hollister welcomed the participants and thanked everyone for their enthusiasm and willingness to volunteer on the committee. In her early years as a librarian, Ms. Hollister said that the topic of EDI was never discussed and that today she is honored to be a part of

the conversation. As chairperson, Ms. Hollister has three areas of focus for this committee. The first is being true to the overarching goals of the committee where all feel welcome and supported. The second is to have empathy for library staff and the treatment of others and third, to focus on library recruitment being inclusive including future library employees through education and mentorship. Ms. Brennan welcomed the members to the EDI committee and thanked them for volunteering. RAILS received many applicants for the EDI Committee and the goal was to select an equitable, diverse and inclusive committee.

6. Introductions

Ms. Lindsay-Ryan, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Consultant, introduced herself to the committee. The committee members shared why they volunteered and what their hopes are for the outcome of the committee. Several of the committee members expressed hope that libraries will be more welcoming to all and be a safe place to gather. There is a hope to do something unique and different and to promote true change. To lessen the fear and to create a platform to speak freely and to move toward empathy and understanding. A hope to discuss systemic racism and then work to undo it, for the committee to create actionable items that libraries can follow, and to educate the current and the next generation of library workers on EDI. Lastly, there was a hope that there can be an honest conversation about what we do not know and to learn from one another in a safe environment and to speak freely.

7. Overview of work

Ms. Lindsay-Ryan talked about the possible scope of the work and discussed three things to focus on when planning. The first is relationship and trust building. Second, is to plan a foundational framework using a common language. Having a baseline of knowledge and the same level of understanding for all committee members will be an important starting point. The third scope is how to foster the work and to determine the priority of the work and the group. Identify where to start, ways to help others and ways to collaborate with other groups to build on the EDI initiative.

8. Potential Pitfalls and Worries

Ms. Lindsay-Ryan asked the group to make a list of possible pitfalls and worries they have for the committee and the work.

Intent vs. Impact

Work stays too high level, not tangible and useful

Be comprehensive in places where we can impact change. What are the policies and programs?

Life distractions cause this work to become secondary

Lip service from libraries

How to measure success?

How much personal experience to bring to the table?

Make sure we balance inward focus and outward focus

Get to actionable plan vs. conversation

Ms. Brennan assured the committee that the RAILS Board and the RAILS staff are committed to the EDI initiative and will support the work of the committee.

9. Review [Committee Charge](#) and [RAILS EDI page](#)

Ms. Brennan reviewed the EDI Committee charge that was previously approved by the RAILS Board on September 26, 2020. The charge was created for the committee as a place to start and to know the focus of the work. Ms. Brennan asked each member to review the charge and to report at the next meeting any suggested additions.

10. Committee Member Terms

Ms. Brennan discussed that each committee member will have a term of service of either 1 year, 2 years or 3 years. Prior to the next meeting, a survey will be sent to inquire of the level of commitment each member has before being randomly set to a specific term. Ms. Brennan talked about the Open Meetings Act (OMA) regarding keeping conversations between committee members to an open meeting session only and to not “reply all” to EDI Committee emails.

11. Schedule of Meetings

Ms. Hollister proposed to have a meeting every other month and the committee agreed. The next meeting will be in February 2021. Ms. Palmisano will send out a Doodle poll in January.

12. Agenda Building for next meeting

Ms. Hollister asked the committee to send any agenda ideas for the February meeting to her or to Ms. Brennan.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Members

- RAILS Board: Dianne Hollister (Chair), Michael Campbell, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Becky Spratford
- Member Representatives:
 - Megan Ballengee, Heartland Community College
 - Victoria Blackmer, Robert R. Jones Public Library
 - Cristina Bueno, Deerfield Public Library
 - Rosie Camargo, Evanston Public Library
 - Edith Craig, St. Charles Public Library
 - Nate Gass, Cook Memorial Public Library District
 - Amber Hayes, ALA’s Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach
 - Emily Kiang, Downers Grove Public Library
 - Stephen Koebel, Wilmette Public Library
 - Shekinah Lawrence, Elmwood Park Public Library
 - Michelle Nielsen Ott, Methodist College
 - Kristen Rademacher, Marist High School
 - Andrea Robinson, Library of Rush University
 - Leora Siegel, Lenhardt Library, Chicago Botanic Garden
 - Sarah Steiger, Chicago Public Schools

- Anna Wassenaar, Blue Island Public Library
 - Leah White, Skokie Public Library
- Ex Officio:
 - RAILS - Deirdre Brennan, Monica Harris, Joseph Filapek