

VIRTUAL MEETING
RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, March 11, 2021
Minutes

1. Welcome

Ms. Nemec-Loise, Advocacy chairperson, greeted members and called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Ms. Nemec-Loise 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.

2. Roll Call of Members—Karen Goyer

Telephone/Zoom: Michael Campbell, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemec-Loise, Thomas Stagg
Absent: Percy Harris

3. Introductions of Guests and Announcements

Burr Ridge: Deirdre Brennan (*ex-officio*)

Telephone/Zoom: Monica Harris (*ex-officio*), Anna Duff, Karen Goyer, Mary Witt (*ex-officio*)

There were no announcements.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments.

5. Adoption of the Agenda

Ms. McHone-Chase moved and Mr. Stagg seconded, that

THE RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE AGENDA BE ADOPTED.

The motion carried. Roll call was taken: Ayes: Michael Campbell, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemec-Loise, and Thomas Stagg. Nays: none.

6. Approval of the Minutes of the February 11, 2021 RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

Mr. Campbell moved, and Ms. McHone-Chase seconded, that

THE RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 11, 2021 MINUTES BE APPROVED.

The motion carried. Roll call was taken: Ayes: Michael Campbell, Sarah McHone-Chase, Jenna Nemec-Loise, and Thomas Stagg. Nays: none.

7. Discussion of Progress on Advocacy Efforts and Topics

7.1. Report on feedback from ILA Legislative Meetups

Ms. Brennan reported the final legislative meetups have been well attended. Legislators in attendance encouraged librarians to ask for more money. Mr. Stagg reported the new legislators in his area did not attend the meeting. Mr. Campbell has found some legislators are anti-property tax and has found it difficult to work with these legislators on multiple levels. Ms. McHone-Chase expressed concern about the report of some legislators being less than supportive of libraries. The group discussed how to educate legislators and others on the impact of libraries and ways to increase advocacy.

Discussion Points:

- It is important to align our advocacy messages with the legislators' priorities. Our messages may be better heard if stated in a monetary form such as a value calculator or return on investment.
- This committee, or the RAILS board, can explore how library users can be library advocates.
- Develop different coalitions of people who can bring pressure to school administrators and others who can ensure schools are staffed with a librarian.
- Educate people on the monetary contribution they make to libraries and schools that they pay through property taxes in order to encourage them to take a stand on library issues.
- Consider advertising what library service is worth.
- Educate people about the reasons libraries need their support.
- Educate people about the incredible stories of what libraries do and the public's reliance on the internet service they provide. 30% of the population relies on the library for internet service.
- Advertise how libraries play an important role in digital literacy, a relevant topic.
- Think about how to reach those who are not currently library users or supporters.
- Think about how to grow the next generation of library advocates.
- Challenge people to think about what communities would look like in the absence of libraries of all types.
- Advocate for the real estate MLS to list library information. A school district with a teacher-librarian adds value to the community and increases property values.
- The American Rescue Plan includes a large amount of money for library infrastructure.
- Think about how to communicate that library issues affect users and non-users of libraries.

Ms. Nemecek-Loise identified the main points of this discussion: a need to appeal to legislators in a way they can relate to, work to find other potential advocates and create coalitions, and make passive support actionable. The ideas discussed today will be revisited at future meetings.

7.2. School Library Data – contact Regional Offices of Education

Keith Curry Lance is performing a study about the role of the school library profession and the shift away from the traditional way school libraries have been assessed in terms of impact. There is an absence of school library data from Illinois to support Mr. Lance's work. Ms. Brennan stated it is also important for RAILS to have a good picture of schools in order to help them. Ms. Brennan will work with Mr. Campbell to obtain data from ISBE or will file a FOIA request for data from ISBE as recommended by Mr. Lance and Ms. Walsh. Mr. Campbell offered the assistance of

a colleague in marketing analytics. It was suggested to use geographic ambassadors to help push the survey out.

7.3. Report from AISLE meeting on March 2, 2021

Ms. Brennan reported at the AISLE meeting on the lack of school data and the topic of cross walking of standards. Carolyn Kinsella, the Executive Secretary of AISLE, was very excited about working on these issues. Ms. Kinsella has been invited to attend the next Advocacy Committee meeting. RAILS Board member, Jennifer McIntosh has reached out to Ms. Nemec-Loise to discuss our advocacy efforts. Ms. Nemec-Loise will report on their discussion at the next meeting of this committee.

The *System E-Content and E-Resources for Illinois Educators* event on March 4, 2021 was jointly sponsored by AISLE, IHLS and RAILS. The event was a great opportunity to advertise resources to school libraries and a good example of multi-type cooperation. The recording and presentation slides are posted on the RAILS website at <https://www.railslibraries.info/events/243523>. The recording is posted on [YouTube](#). These links can be shared with educators and school administrators.

7.4. Specialized libraries advocacy feedback from meeting with Laura Turner – Jenna Nemec-Loise

Ms. Nemec-Loise reached out to Ms. Turner with an invitation to contact her and attend our meetings to give feedback.

7.5. School-academic library collaboration and resource sharing feedback from meeting with Beth Tepen – Jenna Nemec-Loise

Ms. Tepen is a RAILS Board member and a high school librarian in the PrairieCat consortium. Ms. Nemec-Loise extended an invitation to Ms. Tepen to speak at an upcoming Advocacy Committee meeting about resource sharing and relationships with academic or local community college libraries.

8. Agenda Building for Next Meeting

The Advocacy Committee will meet on April 8, 2021. Suggestions for agenda items should be sent to Deirdre Brennan, Jenna Nemec-Loise, or Karen Goyer.

Proposed Agenda Items:

- Possible guest speakers/reports from: Carolyn Kinsella, Jennifer McIntosh, Beth Tepen, Laura Turner
- Ms. Brennan and Mr. Campbell will report on their work obtaining ISBE data and the status of the school library data collection project.
- Identify how much funding is coming to libraries in Illinois from the American Rescue Plan Act and determine how much we want to advocate for.
- Continue discussion of building new advocates from non-advocates
 - Figure out how to reach those not advocating for libraries and why they are not advocates.
 - Focus on new messages from new people in order to hear other perspectives and stories and to balance out the My Library Is . . . work and the data collection we are going to do.
 - What is another dimension to bring to advocacy?
- Updated statewide database proposal and talking points

The updated talking points will be sent to committee members. Ms. Brennan has reached out to colleagues and board members to get a sense of how the state legislature would feel about an additional \$5 million appropriation for databases and to

ask for additions to the proposal. ILA decided not to ask for additional state funding this year. RAILS would prefer to work in partnership with ILA to ask for the funds for the statewide database but will move forward with the proposal.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

Advocacy Committee Members:

- Jenna Nemec-Loise, Chair
- Michael Campbell
- Percy Harris
- Sarah McHone-Chase
- Tom Stagg
 - Ex Officio: Deirdre Brennan, Monica Harris, Mary Witt