

Status of Suggestions from February 2021 RAILS Board Engagement & Communication Survey

Items in red indicate we would like some more clarification from the board at the meeting

RAILS Board Member Suggestions	Status
Board Job Description	
Add language indicating board members should attend conferences, webinars, events, etc. to stay current on what is happening in the library world	Done
Add language indicating that board members should look for opportunities to network with other library professionals, trustees, advocates, etc.	Done
Provide a calendar for board members with upcoming dates of library-related conferences, CE that will help them stay current on what is happening in the library world and with different types of libraries, and potential networking opportunities	We have provided a possible calendar in the packet, but we have questions about exactly what the board would like. A compilation of conference dates, RAILS CE events and networking group meeting dates? RAILS committees and subcommittees meeting dates? We are happy to provide information you need, but please note that this kind of information is also readily available in the E-News and regular monthly reports to the board.
Help board members better understand what RAILS does and provide more examples of how to be an effective ambassador for RAILS	<p>The monthly Service of the Month reports are designed to inform the board about major RAILS programs/services that it is important for them to know about and promote to others in the RAILS community. Beginning at the May 2021 board meeting, RAILS will also provide brief talking points board members can use when speaking about these programs/services to staff/trustees from other RAILS libraries.</p> <p>RAILS will use the megaphone symbol to indicate items in the “This Month at RAILS” report where board members can help us by spreading the word to staff/trustees at their library or type of library.</p>
Highlight the “not so obvious” duties once a year in a board meeting	RAILS will review the job description at the first board meeting of the fiscal year (July), paying particular attention to the “not so obvious” duties

RAILS Board Member Suggestions	Status
Put more focus on how board members can advocate for member libraries and/or libraries in general	Beginning in April 2021, RAILS will highlight current issues in the monthly Executive Director’s report that it is important for board members to address via advocacy activities
Making Board Meetings More Productive	
Take a short break during the meeting	Started taking a break with March board meeting and will continue
After agenda items that have generated a lengthy discussion, summarize the status of the item	ED will do this beginning at the April meeting.
Include summary of committee meetings in the board packet	We have developed a template for these written reports and will work with committee chairs to provide these. We will discuss this more at the meeting as we want to explain timing difficulties in doing this, depending on when committees meet and when board packets need to be sent out.
Have more networking opportunities for board members	A few board members will meet in Coal Valley to attend the April 2021 board meeting. RAILS will continue to look for networking opportunities, particularly as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.
Have more presentations by staff from RAILS member libraries	We would like more information from the board about the kinds of presentations you are interested in.
Provide a document with action items discussed at monthly board meetings, including who (board members and/or RAILS staff) is going to do what and when	RAILS will begin doing this for the April board meeting.
Make it easier for those attending the board meeting via Zoom to speak	Beginning with the April 2021 meeting, those attending meetings via Zoom are encouraged to use the “raise hand” feature during the meeting when they wish to speak. Board President will also invite comments from those attending via Zoom and pause to allow for Zoom delays, particularly when an agenda item has generated a lot of discussion from those attending in Burr Ridge.
Make it easier for those attending the board meeting at locations other than Burr Ridge to speak	Beginning with the April 2021 meeting, Board President will frequently invite comments from those attending at other locations, particularly when an agenda item has generated a lot of discussion from those attending at Burr Ridge.

RAILS Board Member Suggestions	Status
Board Reports	
Provide a briefing for new board members on what the different parts of the financial report mean, what they cover, etc.	RAILS will provide this information at our annual orientation session for new board members
Provide a written narrative summary of the financial report in the board packet	Done – RAILS began including this summary in the March 2021 board packet
Make changes to six-month or annual strategic plan reports – they are text heavy and it is difficult to get through the entire report	RAILS will discontinue the six-month/annual strategic plan reports and provide special reports throughout the year on major service categories, special projects, etc. In February, we provided a report on LLSAPs, in April, there will be a report on delivery.
Board members indicated the importance of topics covered by FY 2021 Service of the Month and the FY 2021 Board Development reports.	RAILS will develop a calendar for FY 2022 Service of the Month and board development reports for discussion at the July 2022 board meeting. They will include topics current board members thought were most important, as well as topics RAILS believes it is very important for board members to know about and/or to promote to staff and trustees at RAILS member libraries.

RAILS Board Member Job Description

General Description

The RAILS Board of Directors is composed of 15 individuals who work as a team on issues affecting the long-term future of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and its member libraries. The board includes:

- Eight board members from RAILS public libraries
- One individual employed by a RAILS academic library
- One individual employed by a RAILS school library
- One individual employed by a RAILS special library
- Four individuals elected at large and currently employed or current members of the governing board of a RAILS public, academic, school, or special library

All board members represent the overall interests and needs of RAILS member libraries as a whole across a 27,000 square mile area, rather than individual libraries, institutions, or specific communities/regions.

Board members are elected by the RAILS membership and serve without compensation. (RAILS reimburses board members for travel and other necessary expenses.) The RAILS Board may also appoint board members to fill vacancies between elections.

Term

The term of office for a RAILS Board member is three years. No board member may serve more than a total of six years unless two years have elapsed since the sixth year of service.

General Duties/Responsibilities

- Attend and actively participate in 11 board meetings per year either in person, at a [RAILS videoconference location](#), or via Zoom. (RAILS will reimburse all travel and lodging costs to attend board meetings.) Review agendas and all supporting documents prior to each meeting.
- Actively serve on at least one [board committee](#)
- Monitor the system's finances and overall financial health and approve all budgets and expenditures
- Establish, review, revise, and approve policies for the effective management of the system
- Hire and evaluate the performance of the RAILS Executive Director
- Stay informed about RAILS programs/services by reading the weekly *RAILS E-News* and other means

Deleted: or

- Promote the latest RAILS news, including information about programs/services, to other staff and trustees at your library and/or to other RAILS members from your type of library
- Attend conferences, webinars, events, etc. to stay current on what is happening with different types of libraries (academic, public, school, and specialized) and in the library world in general
- Seek opportunities to network with other library professionals, trustees, advocates, etc.
- Serve as an ambassador and advocate for RAILS, RAILS member libraries of all types (academic, public, school, and specialized), and for libraries in general

Requirements

- Cannot have more than two unexcused absences from board meetings during the system year
- Must be a legal resident in the RAILS geographic region
- Complete Open Meetings Act training within 90 days of being seated on the RAILS Board
- File an annual Statement of Economic Interest as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act
- File an annual Conflict of Interest form
- Maintain familiarity with Illinois library system laws*, the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act (OMA), the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act, the State Official and Employees' Ethics Act, and with Robert's Rules of Order
- New board members must attend an orientation session (approximately four hours) at the RAILS Burr Ridge service center prior to beginning service on the board or shortly thereafter. RAILS will reimburse all travel/lodging costs.

Acknowledgement

(To be signed after election/appointment)

I acknowledge that I have read this job description and can meet the responsibilities and requirements listed.

Signature

Date

*See additional information about board service in the Reaching Across Illinois Library System Bylaws, [Article Five](#) and the Illinois Library System Act, [section 3030.250](#).

RAILS Board Calendar of Events

Month	Agenda Items/Topics
January	Notification of Internet Certification Process
	Filing for SEIs Due – (submit list of those who need to file)
	RAILS Quarterly Consortial Reports
	ALA midwinter meeting (end of January)
February	Appoint Nominating Committee for March Board Election
	Public Library Association (PLA) Annual Conference (end of February)
March	Executive Director evaluation process
	SEI notice email from Cook County in March
April	Draft of System Area and Per Capita Grant Application + List of Membership Certification Membership Status Changes (if warranted)
	Notification of All systems Board meeting date
	Board members complete evaluation of Executive Director for May
	Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) – (filed by Board members)
	RAILS Quarterly Consortial Reports
May	Six-Month Review of Closed Session Minutes 5ILCS 120/2(c)(21)
	President or designee compiles Executive Director evaluations for June Meeting
	Approval of APC
June	Plaques: goodbye to retiring and non-returning board members
	Preliminary Board Meeting Fiscal Year Calendar
	Nominating committee presents slate of officers
	Closed session to discuss the findings and recommendations of Executive Director evaluation
	ALA annual conference (end of June)
July	Board Orientation
	RAILS Board Officers Signatures for Bank
	Swearing in of newly elected members with Oath of Office
	Election of Board Officers
	Committee Appointments by new President
	OMA certification for new board members
	Annual filing of conflict of interest form
	RAILS Quarterly Consortial Reports
	Board Meeting Fiscal Year Calendar Approval
August	Review of Annual Report Draft
September	Annual Report Acceptance
	Audit Report Acceptance
October	RAILS Quarterly Consortial Reports
	ILA annual conference
November	Six-Month Review of Closed Session Minutes 5ILCS 120/2(c)(21)
December	Meeting is dependent upon calendar approved in July

