

RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING

January 13, 2022 | 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Robin Helenthal, Advocacy Committee chairperson, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Helenthal read the following: In accordance with the Governor's Emergency Proclamation, 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.

Brennan introduced new Advocacy Committee member, Juanita Harrell from DuPage County Law Library. Harrell represents Special Libraries on this committee.

2. Roll Call of Members

Goyer called the roll of Committee members.

Telephone/Zoom: Alice Creason, Juanita Harrell, Robin Helenthal, Sarah McHone-Chase, Thomas Stagg, Amy Walsh (joined at 3:31 p.m.)

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Monica Harris (*ex-officio*)

Guests in attendance via Zoom: Deirdre Brennan (*ex-officio*), Karen Goyer (minute taker), Stacy Palmisano, Mary Witt (*ex-officio*)

There were no announcements.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1. Adoption of the Agenda

5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of December 9, 2021

Sarah McHone-Chase moved, and Alice Creason seconded, that

THE RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

Roll call was taken: Ayes: Alice Creason, Juanita Harrell, Robin Helenthal, Sarah McHone-Chase, Thomas Stagg. Nays: none. Absent: Amy Walsh.

6. Unfinished Business

6.1. Update on statewide database legislation

Brennan checks in weekly with Senator Murphy's chief of staff. The latest report is the statewide database legislation has been sent to Springfield staff to file the bill.

6.2. Legislative updates

RAILS has no additional legislative updates. ILA (Illinois Library Association) is continuing work on various proposals.

7. New Business

7.1. Advocacy work on Illinois Secretary of State election

Brennan stated it is not appropriate for RAILS to advocate for candidates since RAILS operates under the Secretary of State. ILA is considering submitting written questions to candidates. Brennan suggested at a future meeting, Advocacy Committee members discuss the kinds of questions we recommend be asked.

7.2. Recruitment of Advocacy Committee member

Brennan successfully recruited Juanita Harrell who was introduced at the beginning of the meeting.

7.3. Media literacy curriculum collaboration between Peoria Public Library and Peoria school districts

Helenthal discussed past and future media literacy programs centered around the school curriculum, that are a result of collaboration between Peoria Public Library, Peoria Public Schools District 150, and Bradley University. The school district librarians approached the Peoria Public Library for collaboration regarding media literacy programming.

Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, HB0234 requires every public high school to include in its curriculum a unit of instruction on media literacy. Peoria Public Library is currently waiting for the curriculum to be developed and will continue to partner with the schools when possible.

Brennan suggested RAILS record a podcast with the groups involved in the collaboration, particularly about who will teach the media literacy unit. RAILS will reach out to AISLE (Association of Illinois School Educators) about the media literacy curriculum issue.

7.4. Schedule of ILA Library Legislative Meet-Ups

This committee asks that each member attend at least one of the ILA Legislative Meet-Ups. RAILS will supply talking points and a list of legislators. The talking points are intended for informational purposes and to use when writing thank you messages to the legislators who attend. The first meet-up is on January 24, 2022.

7.5. Challenges to materials in school libraries

This is an important advocacy issue for school libraries. The issue was a topic at a recent AISLE meeting and affects public libraries as well as school libraries. RAILS members have expressed interest about this issue due to recent FOIA requests and challenges concerning materials at Illinois libraries. The topic will be addressed at the Member Update webinar on January 19th. ILA, IHLS, and RAILS signed to support the AISLE Statement on Attempts to Censor or Remove Books from School Libraries.

8. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held on February 10, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. The next steps and topics for the February meeting agenda are:

- RAILS Podcast on media literacy collaboration in Peoria
- Distribution of talking points and list of Illinois legislators to committee members
- Dan Bostrom to speak about Specialized libraries at February meeting
- Look at RAILS strategic plan related to advocacy
- School data and advocacy

Data is needed to understand the situation in school libraries to properly advocate for them. Keith Curry Lance, working on a nationwide library data project, discovered that much of the Illinois school library data is incomplete. RAILS is hiring a temporary research assistant and added questions to the annual certification to gather school data. Currently, ISBE only tracks whether the school library is staffed, without noting if that staff is volunteer, part-time, full-time, an aide, a librarian, or a teacher. Walsh noted a

recent AISLE meeting brought up two major concerns. One concern is that many times a staff member that is designated as the school librarian is actually a teacher that is in the classroom all day and not present in the library. Often, that person's only role is to approve purchasing and put together book selections. The second concern is school districts with many buildings that employ one librarian for the entire district. Brennan stated this type of information will be addressed by the RAILS research assistant.

- Reports on ILA Legislative Meet-Ups

9. Adjournment – Robin Helenthal

Helenthal adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.