

RAILS BOARD ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

May 11, 2023 | 4:00 p.m.
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Monica Harris, RAILS Executive Director called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Committee Members

Palmisano called roll. Present on Zoom: Monica Caldicott, Alice Creason, Juanita Harrell, Thomas Stagg, Amy Walsh. Absent: Robin Helenthal, Sarah McHone-Chase, Kara Thorstenson.

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Harris read the following announcement: "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. This meeting will be recorded as per the statutory requirements." There were no other announcements.

Palmisano announced guests: Joe Filapek, Monica Harris, Ryan Hebel, Sophie Kenney, Renya Krempf, and Stacy Palmisano.

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 April 13, 2023

Caldicott moved for the approval of the consent agenda. Harrell seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Caldicott, Creason, Harrell, Stagg, Walsh. Nays: None

6. New Business

6.1 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Harris introduced Kenney, the founder and co-leader of the BIPOC group. The networking group started in 2020 in response to society-wide experiences of discrimination and racism as well as from her personal experience of being the only BIPOC person in multiple libraries she worked in. The group's 127 subscribers represent over 50 libraries from a wide geographical area and all position levels. It offers its members support, mentorship, and shared resources like a curated BIPOC and LGBTQ performer list or available job openings. In response to Caldicott's question, Kenney confirmed that school library staff are welcome to join. Harris thanked Kenney for the presentation and noted the BIPOC group is doing some of the most impactful EDI work among libraries in Illinois. Harrel expressed her appreciation for the mentoring program in which she participates. Caldicott presented an equity audit of the Vernon Hills High School Library. The goal is to determine how the current collection matches the diverse student body and to add books that reflect that diversity. Each item is evaluated on the cover image, author, and main characters. The library plans

to analyze the audit data, compare it to the school's demographics and share the results with student groups.

Filapek gave a summary of RAILS initiatives in EDI, including continuing education, making grants available to support EDI work, recording live events so they can be viewed on demand, and a monthly EDI learning cohort. He is also looking at offering self-paced learning modules, is exploring training available through the work of Mia Henry from Freedom Lifted, and EDI training for library trustees. Harris and Stagg commended Filapek's efforts.

7. Unfinished Business

7.1 Legislative and Advocacy Update – Monica Harris

Harris gave the legislative and advocacy update. The Advocacy Committee reported on a successful offering of "Ready, Set, Advocate". Going forward there will be two versions of the program available – one for the general audience and one specifically for frontline staff. ALA gave an update on their "fund libraries" program. There are unexpected shortfalls in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget which need to be solved before legislation can be approved. Harris mentioned HB 2789 was approved and is moving to the governor for signature. Afterward, ISL will develop implementation rules after a public comment period around July 1st. The effective date of the legislation will be January 1, 2024. SB 2419, the License to Read Act, passed the House. She also mentioned a secondary book-banning bill - Senate Bill 0689, which amends several library-related laws to make sure that access to materials on certain topics is not limited. There was concern about the statement allowing to impose limitations based on public safety issues. It does not affect library funding, but it does affect system membership, which may be even more detrimental to libraries. Lastly, Harris gave a reminder about the ongoing RAILS Board election. As of the meeting date, 90 votes have been received.

7.2 Library Issues Updates

Walsh gave an update on AISLE advocacy for school librarians and library aides. They drafted a statement for school administrators regarding the importance of these positions and are considering letters to congratulate districts that hire new librarians. Harris volunteered RAILS' partnership in that initiative. Caldicott mentioned unutilized funding for school libraries. She added that the High School Librarians networking group mailing list will be moving to the RAILS Listserv so that all school librarians can participate.

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

The next meeting will be held on June 8th at 4:00 p.m. Emergency proclamation will no longer be in effect, so the quorum must be physically present. Reimbursements for travel expenses will be available.

Next month's topics will be My Library Is... presented by Dan Bostrom and also the approval of FY 2024 meeting schedule.

9. Adjournment

Monica Harris adjourned the meeting at 5:11 pm.