

RAILS UNIVERSAL SERVICE COMMITTEE MEETING

September 7, 2023 | 1:00 pm

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Alice Creason, Chair called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Committee Members
Krempl called roll of the RAILS Universal Service Committee members. Present:
Lewis University: Alice Creason
Rock Island Public Library: Angela Campbell
Burr Ridge: Su Reynders, Brooke Sievers, Michelle Roubal (arrived 1:03 p.m.)
Eola Road Branch: Catherine Yanikoski
Absent: Lynn Stainbrook, Alissa Williams
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Stacy Palmisano, Renya Krempl (designated minute taker)
Zoom: Gwen Harrison, Illinois State Library
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Minutes of March 7, 2023
Reynders moved for the approval of the consent agenda. Sievers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. Introduction of New Committee Members
Harris introduced the new committee members and invited them to talk briefly about themselves and their motivation for joining the committee.
7. Discussion of Member Terms, Meeting Schedule, and Committee Charge
Harris proposed discussing a revised charge of the committee in a future meeting and invited questions regarding the current version. The proposed future meeting dates were reviewed and agreed on by the committee members. Harris stated that historically, member terms were more specifically defined. RAILS will reach out to non-RAILS board members post-meeting about their choice of term.

8. Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) Update

Harris stated that the issue of the unserved population regularly comes up in committee discussions. The Sept 28th meeting of ISLAC will focus primarily on the statewide online resources project. She clarified that ISLAC meetings are bimonthly open meetings, and available through an online platform.
9. Unfinished Business
 - 9.1 Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Project Update

Harris gave a background on the MLS project, which was initiated by the committee the previous year with the goal of letting new homeowners know whether they are eligible for library service. Letters with the request were submitted to MLS authorities. There are no updates yet.
10. New Business
 - 10.1 Overview of Universal Service Concerns in Illinois

Filapek acknowledged the depth and breadth of knowledge about this issue among the Committee members. He gave an overview of the history of the issue of the Unserved population in Illinois, which goes back 70 years. There was a brief discussion of solutions that had been tried previously and of the current situation. Committee members requested further data relating to the issue.
 - 10.2 Broadband access update

Harris informed the committee that initially about \$1 billion in funding will be available for high-speed broadband access in Illinois. The Secretary of State's office has been working on a survey to gather information about the level of access and speed available to Illinois users, including libraries. RAILS Director of Technology Anne Slaughter has been a member of the Illinois Broadband Advisory Council (representing the Illinois Library Association) for several years. Recently, the Illinois Heartland Library System, CARLI, and RAILS began working together on issues of advocacy surrounding Broadband access in Illinois and the role that Illinois libraries play in supporting digital equity. Harris mentioned that Illinois Senate Bill 851 was recently signed into law. It expands the Broadband Advisory Council's responsibilities to include the evaluation of the Illinois Century Network expansion to include libraries and correctional institutions. Anne Slaughter has been invited to present on this issue in more depth at the next Universal Services committee meeting.
 - 10.3 Statewide databases and online educational resources update

Harris pointed out that Illinois is one of only two states in the country that do not offer access to a statewide centrally funded group of databases. For FY2024, the Secretary of State included a \$5 million allocation in his budget to fund statewide databases for Illinois. Unserved residents are expected to be served by this online resources package, as well as those who receive library service. This issue will be a focus of the upcoming ISLAC meeting. The Illinois State Library has been studying similar programs in other states, especially in Michigan, where this program has been in place for many years. Once in place, the program could result in significant savings for Illinois libraries.

11. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Universal Service Committee Meeting on December 7th, 2023

Creason summarized the meeting and listed the following topics for the next meeting: ISLAC update, MLS update, broadband access presentation, and statewide database updates.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Final vote or action may be taken at the meeting on any agenda item subject matter listed above, unless the agenda item specifically states otherwise.

DRAFT