



125 Tower Drive
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
630.734.5000
630.734.5050

railslibraries.org

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

February 8, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

RAILS Bolingbrook and Videoconference Sites

1000 West Crossroads Parkway, Suite A, Bolingbrook, IL 60490 | 630.734.5000

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order
Caldicott welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call of Members
Goyer called the roll of the committee members:
Engineering Systems, Inc: Catherine Yanikoski
Cook Memorial Aspen Drive Library: Monica Caldicott
Lewis University: Alice Creason, Amy Walsh
Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen
Thomas Ford Memorial Library: Jean Carroll
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Bolingbrook: Joe Filapek (ex-officio), Monica Harris (ex-officio), Karen Goyer (minute-taker)
Guests in attendance via Zoom: Dan Bostrom, Janette Derucki, Kate Niehoff, Anne Slaughter
New committee member, Stephanie Nissen, was welcomed and introduced to the group.
4. Public Comments – Monica Caldicott
There were no public comments.
5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of November 9, 2023
Creason moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Yanikoski seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. Support for Broadband and Digital Equality
Anne Slaughter, RAILS Director of Technology Services, provided an update on the status of broadband expansion and digital equity initiatives in Illinois. There is an historic level of funding through the federal infrastructure act to ensure that as many people as possible have access to high-speed internet and equipment to take part in the digital aspects of society. The initiative consists of

two programs: [Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program \(BEAD\)](#) and the [Digital Equity Act](#). Both programs have libraries embedded in them. The state funded Illinois Office of Broadband through the Connect Illinois initiative is also working on digital equity. The state is currently making sure maps are accurate to determine which programs receive funding. RAILS, along with along with CARLI and IHLS, has submitted two open letters outlining several recommendations for further strengthening the draft Digital Equity Plan. The open letters can be found at [Broadbandforlibraries.com](#) as well as information on both of the programs and links to other resources. Slaughter noted it is important for libraries to be aware of the [Illinois Broadband Lab](#) focused on community engagement and research, and to sign up for the [Illinois Office of Broadband](#) website newsletter. Slaughter suggested libraries look at their existing library services, the needs in the communities and local organizations, look for regional, county, university, and local partnership opportunities, and talk to political and community leaders. Harris thanked Slaughter for her work on this very complex issue.

6.2. Illinois Libraries – Agencies of Impact Report

Janette Derucki gave an overview of the Illinois Libraries: Agencies of Impact Data Study. The study was completed in early 2023. The report compares library expenditures with other industries; the value of library services based on return on investment; libraries as logistics experts, valued destinations, and as global information suppliers; and librarianship as a profession. Committee member feedback noted the data is useful and presented in an engaging format. The report allows for those without knowledge of libraries to understand their value. RAILS plans to share the report statewide with library stakeholders and legislators.

6.3. Serving Unhoused and Migrant Populations

Harris began the discussion noting 34,000 migrants arrived in Chicago since 2022 and in 2020, approximately 10,430 people experienced homelessness on any given day in Illinois. Yankoski shared that Joliet Public Library's efforts to assist the local unsheltered population included a monthly roundtable with a group of unsheltered and representatives that offer services. The discussions proved to be useful for all involved. It was suggested that the lessons learned from the libraries that work with the unsheltered be compiled and distributed to make positive change. Many migrant cultures are not aware they are able to enter a library and do not know what services are available. Some libraries offer library cards for the unsheltered. Walsh noted that homeless youth have unique needs. Harris asked members to bring examples of library programs for the unhoused and migrant populations to the group for future discussion.

6.4. ALA Annual Reports on Legislation and Intellectual Freedom Overview

Harris discussed the reports on legislation and intellectual freedom from the ALA Council at the LibLearnX conference. Of note in the Committee on legislation Reports, is the Federal Legislative and Public Policy Agenda for 2024 which frames the issues Illinois legislators need to know about. The group agreed the reports are useful and look forward to seeing future reports.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris reported the ILA Public Policy Committee met on February 5, 2024. There are five bills that ILA is watching. There may be additional bills that PPC will look at next month.

1. HB2401 – Diversity and Literature Act related to a requirement that school library material is diverse in nature and gives the school board control over material selection. There is potential for an amendment that addresses the issues of concern.
2. HB4418 – provides for potential exemptions for virtual meetings under the Open Meetings Act.
3. HB4567 – puts library employees in a separate class for purposes of threats or assaults and would require a change in the criminal code and up to the state’s attorney whether to charge individuals with this crime. School libraries employees would not be covered by this bill.
4. SB173 – this is one of several privacy bills ILA is watching. This bill requires employers to notify staff if workplace electronic monitoring is in place. An example of workplace monitoring would be tracking how employees use the internet.
5. SB2787 went to committee on 2/7/24. This bill raises the bid threshold. There was a large amount of support for this bill from witness slips. There has been pushback so ILA will work with libraries to learn more about what the process looks like.

A legislative priority for ILA is an upcoming bill reducing the amount required on a treasurer bond from 50 percent to 10 percent of the operating budget. Another legislative priority is equitable access to e-resources. ILA received a 14-page letter from a New York publisher describing issues with the legislation. ILA will continue to work on the language of the bill.

Creason noted that Richton Park Public Library could share their recent experience to support the bid threshold bill. Walsh asked for an update on the statewide database implementation. Harris responded that according to the Illinois State Library, it is under procurement. The RFP for the \$5 million statewide database package is with the Secretary of State for review. The RFP is similar to those of other states. There will be a three-year contract with the ability to renew for seven years. The package will contain full text databases of general interest aligned to early learning and K-12, undergraduate resources, newspapers, genealogy, test preparation and business resources. eBooks may be considered. Training and documentation will be included. The goal is to evaluate the RFP by March 2024 with an announcement by April. The database package could be available by the end of FY2024. A regulatory item has been filed to allow for the unserved to become a patron of the state library for access to the database only.

7.2. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Walsh reported the AISLE Advocacy Committee met in December, noting Derucki gave the committee a demonstration of the SLATE dashboard. The committee invited school librarians to thank their school board for passing the policy that agrees to follow ALA’s Library Bill of Rights. AISLE has formed a task force to advocate for a certified librarian in every school. Harris and Derucki have been invited to attend the first meeting of the task force.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

There were no reports or updates on library issues.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on March 14, 2024

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on March 14, 2024 at 4:00 pm. The topic will be Intellectual Freedom and Materials Challenges.

10. Adjournment

Caldicott adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.