

Policy on Meeting via Electronic Means

Approved by RAILS Board July 1, 2011

Amended by RAILS Board August 24, 2018

The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) board believes it is in the best interest of its members and Illinois residents that the fullest participation and attendance in all meetings be achieved whenever possible.

The RAILS board in all of its regular, special, and committee meetings complies and intends to comply with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act. The Open Meetings Act allows attendance at public body meetings through audio conference, video conference, or by any other electronic conferencing without physical attendance.

The Open Meetings Act also allows library systems with jurisdiction over specific geographic area of more than 4,500 square miles [5 ILCS 120/7(d)], such as RAILS, to permit board and committee members to attend meetings by other means than physical presence so long as they adopt specific procedural rules.

1. All pertinent provisions of the Open Meetings Act must be complied with, including specifically the proper notice of any regular or special meeting, the proper record keeping or minutes of each meeting, the appropriate agenda preparation and posting for each meeting, in particular, any use of closed sessions shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Act.
2. RAILS board members or RAILS board committee members may attend by video and/or audio conferencing or by other electronic means for quorum and voting purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act.
3. All RAILS board members or committee members attending meetings by electronic conferencing shall be entitled to vote as if they were personally and physically present at the meeting site so long as a quorum is, in total, present.
4. A board member or committee member who attends a meeting by video or audio conference must provide notice to the recording secretary at least 48 hours prior to the meeting unless such advance notice is impracticable.
5. A member may attend an RAILS board meeting or committee meeting through electronic conferencing if, in the opinion of the member, his or her physical presence at the meeting is unable to be obtained or is inconvenient for any reason including, but not limited to reasons such as personal schedule or time conflicts, length of required travel time, the high cost of such travel, or vehicle, fuel or time involved.

6. Availability of electronic participation in RAILS board or committee meetings shall be indicated on the agenda and posted according to the Open Meetings Act.
7. The meeting minutes shall include, but need not be limited to; i) the date, time and place of the meeting; ii) the members who were either present or absent from the meeting and whether those members in attendance were physically present or present by audio conference, video conference or by other electronic means; iii) a summary of discussion on all matters proposed, deliberated, or decided, and iv) a record of any votes taken.
8. The location of the meeting included on the notice shall be equipped with a suitable transmission system (e.g. a speakerphone) in order that the public audience, the members in attendance and any staff in attendance will be able to hear any input, vote or discussion of the conference and that the member attending by electronic means shall have a similar capability of hearing and participating in such input, vote or discussion.
9. At the beginning of RAILS board and committee meetings and as necessary during the meeting, the chair will check with all remote location(s) with RAILS board or committee member(s) present to ensure that each such connection is active.
10. The chair will call on all remote location board and committee members throughout the meeting to encourage full participation and discussion.
11. All decisions will be made using majority rule except when a higher vote is required.
12. There will be no sidebar discussions among board members at any time.
13. Members attending a meeting remotely must comply with 625 ILCS 5/12-610.2(b) which prohibits persons from using an electronic communication device to participate in any video conferencing app (i.e., Zoom, Teams, WebEx) while operating a motor vehicle.

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