

Approved 11/14/24

Minutes

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

September 19, 2024 | 4:00 p.m.

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

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:
Present:
 - RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn
 - Cook Memorial Public Library District: Monica Caldicott
 - Engineering Systems, Inc.: Catherine Yanikoski
 - Lewis University: Alice Creason, Amy Walsh (4:04 pm)
 - RAILS East Peoria: Dianne Hollister
 - Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Joe Filapek (ex-officio), Karen Goyer (minute-taker), Monica Harris (ex-officio)
Guests via Zoom: Dan Bostrom (ex-officio), Anupam Goel (RAILS Board), Rene Leyva (RAILS Board), Gail Meyer (AISLE)

Harris introduced new committee members Dianne Hollister and Karen Voitik.
4. Public Comments
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 July 11, 2024
Carroll moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Hollister seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

6. New Business

6.1. School Libraries and Certification

Gail Meyer, AISLE Advocacy Committee Chair, discussed AISLE's proposal to form a Certified Librarian Legislative Task Force. AISLE's goal is to have a certified librarian in every school building. The purpose of the task force is to educate legislators on a certified librarian's impact on student success and life-long learning. The task force would submit a report and recommendations on funding and staffing school libraries. The committee provided feedback on the proposal's wording and ISBE license terminology. It is unclear if there are requirements to be on the task force and the process for selecting members was not defined. It was suggested AISLE reach out to the Illinois Reading Council. It was suggested there be an opportunity for RAILS and other organizations to sign a statement of support.

6.2. Advocacy for Academic Libraries

Harris shared the CARLI (Consortium of Academic and Research Librarians) *Statement on the Importance of Librarians in Academic Libraries*. As of May 2025, Western Illinois University will no longer employ any professional academic librarians. Committee members discussed the impact on students and the precedent this decision will set for all levels of learning. Filapek suggested alumni share their stories of how the library or librarian impacted their lives or careers.

Wilburn moved for the approval to recommend to the RAILS Board to approve the *Statement on the Importance of Librarians in Academic Libraries*, Nissen seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

6.3. FY2025 Agenda Topics

Members suggested the following topics for the remainder of the FY25 Advocacy Committee meetings:

- Create a resource on how to support libraries of all types.
- The development of a task force or project.
- Take a topic the committee is passionate about and make it shareable.
- Create a proposal for a conference.
- Write an article for the ILA Reporter.
- Create a "How to Contact Your Legislator" program or a "Day of Action".
- Look at the most pressing needs of each library type.
- Collaboration opportunities between library types.
- Educate the public on the library's stance and process concerning book challenges.
- Support for library directors under fire by the public or the library board.
- Crisis communication for libraries.
- Managing the relationship with the board for smaller libraries.
- Advocacy related to library association challenges and membership withdrawal (ILA & SLA).

Harris will review the suggestions and determine a topic for the next meeting.

7. Reports

7.1. Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris reported the ILA Public Policy Committee’s 2024-2025 legislative priorities are awaiting approval from the Executive Board. Legislative priorities include compensation reporting requirements, a task force to streamline records retention requirements, and Libraries Connect broadband support. The ILA Advocacy committee reported the [Legislative Meetups](#) registration is open. Meetups are scheduled for December 2024 at locations across the state.

7.2. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Walsh reported the AISLE Advocacy Committee will continue the letter writing campaign. One or two districts will be targeted each year for additional follow up. Templates for self-advocacy have been updated. The AISLE Advocacy Committee is hosting a series of [book discussions](#) on “That Librarian” by Amanda Jones beginning October 23, 2024.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

Walsh reported the recent trend of false social media postings has taxed local resources and locked down schools. As an advocacy group, we can look for efforts to decrease social media time and increase digital citizenship education.

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

The next meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 14, 2024. The topic is to be determined.

10. Adjournment

Caldicott adjourned the meeting at 5:18 p.m.