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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, September 27, 2024 | 1:00 PM
Bloomington Public Library
205 E. Olive Street, Bloomington, IL 61701

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Rene Leyva, RAILS Board President called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, September 27, 2024, at the Bloomington Public Library.

2. Roll Call of Members

Fister called the roll of the Board members.

Bloomington Public Library: Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik

Burr Ridge: Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Anupam Goel, Catherine Yanikoski

Zoom: Emily Porter (1:113 p.m.)

Absent: Vanessa Villarreal-Kraenzle

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

President Leyva thanked Jeanne Hamilton and Nan Goerlitz of Bloomington Public Library for their hospitality and for hosting this meeting. Jeanne gave RAILS a great tour of the newly renovated library, which was beautiful and informative.

Guests in Bloomington Public Library: Monica Harris, Dan Bostrom, Joe Filapek, Mark Hatch, Wesley Smith, Stacy Palmisano, Jessica Silva, Mary Kate Murray, Cyndi Robinson, Laura Keyes, Amy Harris, Rebecca Seaborn, Emily Fister-designated note taker.

Guests in Burr Ridge: Sharon Swanson, Anne Slaughter, Riley Martin, Galin Iliev

Guests on Zoom: Kate Niehoff, Sam Daly, Mandy Saia

4. Public comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent agenda

5.1 Adoption of the Agenda

5.2 RAILS Board Minutes of August 23, 2024 Regular Meeting

5.3 Approval of Disbursements: August 2024 – Sharon Swanson

Leyva announced that the agenda was revised to include #11. "Board Member Reports".

Milavec moved and Voitik seconded to approve the consent agenda. A roll call vote was taken: Ayes:

Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Anupam Goel, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, and Catherine Yanikoski.

Nays: none.

6. Annual Audit Report FY2024

Swanson reported the thirteenth annual financial audit of RAILS has been completed and copies of the annual financial audit, the single audit, the management letter, and the Statement on Auditing Standards 114 letter were included in the packet. She noted that acceptance of the report is being requested instead of approval to avoid giving the impression that Lauterbach and Amen are under the supervision of RAILS.

Riley Martin, Audit Supervisor at Lauterbach and Amen reviewed the management letter to the Board of Directors that summarizes the audit and stressed the “clean” or “unmodified” audit rating in the opinion section. This means there are no omissions or errors that would make the financial statements misleading at all. He said the Management’s discussion and analysis provide a summary of the fiscal year and suggests the board members read this document as it is easier to understand than the financial statements.

He reported an increase of the General Fund Balance of \$1.75M largely due to the increases in interest income and APC grant funding increases, and a decrease in the capital project funds which is the result of capital expense outlays. Since RAILS receives more than \$750,000 in federal funds, as part of the annual APC grant this requires the auditors to submit more internal controls and compliance testing and examination procedures all included in the single audit document. They have no findings and once again offered a clean opinion. Green said they do audits for many government clients and all the issues covered in the management letter are concerned with GASBY announcements.

Emily Porter joined the meeting at 1:13 p.m.

Milavec moved and Kowalcze seconded for the acceptance audit report for FY 2024. A roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Anupam Goel, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, and Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

7. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported the financial reports ending August 31, 2024 show a general fund unassigned cash and investment balance (approximately \$22.8 million), which would fund approximately 19.3 months of budgeted FY2025 operations. General fund revenues through August were approximately \$742,000 below budget primarily due to the effects of EBSCO being selected as the vendor for the Statewide Database program. These revenues are fully offset by the E-Resources expenditure line, so they do not affect the bottom line. She reported General fund expenditures through August of over \$3.25 million were nearly \$1.17 million below budget due to the below budget Library Materials expenditures for the EBSCO group purchase and the timing differences between budgeted and actual renewals for several other group purchases. During August, RAILS received and paid \$61,264 for the twelfth of thirteen vehicles ordered during FY2024. Since the end of August, RAILS has received and paid for six of the eight vehicle purchases budgeted for FY2025.

8. Reports

8.1 Report from the RAILS President

Leyva had no report.

8.2 RAILS Board Committee Reports - Committee Chairs

Caldicott commented that the Advocacy Committee had a great turnout and was full of great ideas and participation. There were no other additions or questions about the committee reports.

8.3 RAILS Reports

8.3.1 RAILS Monthly Report

Harris shared that Ancel Glink drafted a memo regarding the treasurer's bond legislation signed into law on July 1. The memo explains the change in law and what libraries should do regarding their insurance renewals. This memo was shared with the Directors' Listserv on Wednesday, September 25, and more information will be shared with the wider membership soon. The Illinois State Library's Advisory Council (ISLAC) met on Thursday, September 26, in Springfield. At the meeting, much of the discussion at the meeting revolved around grant equity as well as the actual savings libraries will see as a result of the statewide database program. Harris received a formal invitation to join ISLAC as a voting member on behalf of RAILS. ISLAC will be forming two subcommittees—one on universal service and one on diversity. Harris highlighted Anne Slaughter's appointment as the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Broadband Advisory Council Chair, and the feature on WBEZ (and other public radio stations) for the Illinois Libraries: Agencies of Impact Data Study. Harris reported that the RAILS Board EDI Committee is transitioning to a new format, but the group's exact structure is to be determined.

8.3.2 RAILS Delivery Overview LLSAP Support Overview and Broadband Activity

Hatch presented the facilities overview including lease and renewal information, rental and monthly operational cost (utilities, repairs, cleaning & misc.). He explained the Delivery department operates a hybrid system, subcontracting some deliveries to Continental Transport Logistics (CTL). CTL works with libraries of the SWAN And CCS consortia systems in the Burr Ridge and Wheeling areas.

RAILS Delivery hubs are:

Bolingbrook: SWAN/PrairieCat/Pinnacle

Coal Valley: PrairieCat

East Peoria: RSA

Rockford: PrairieCat

Hatch said RAILS strives to make the system as user-friendly as possible with predetermined delivery routes; emailed notifications to members regarding route delays or other communications; and a help desk ticketing system to communicate issues or request service. He explained the RAILS and ILDS labeling system for materials simplifies the systems as well for users and RAILS drivers and sorters. All drivers use an iPad to collect delivery data which aids in the required delivery count required annually by the Illinois State Library. RAILS provides training for new library personnel via training videos which can be found on the RAILS delivery page on the website:

<https://railslibraries.org/delivery>.

Filipek commented that the RAILS Delivery department is the envy of many other states.

8.4 Illinois State Library

Mandy Saia at the Illinois State Library (ISL) reported that Secretary Giannoulis just announced \$28 million in grant awards, which includes \$18 million for regional library systems, almost \$5.8 million for literacy grants, \$500,000 for Project Next Generation, \$350,000 for Radio Information Services, and \$50,000 for Veterans' Homes' Libraries. Public libraries were notified this week that Public Library Construction Grants will be available soon. School District Library Grant applications are due October 15. These grants will award approximately \$0.88 per student with a minimum of \$850.

Applications for the Public Library Per Capita Grant will open soon with a deadline of January 30, 2025. All applicants are required to submit certification of compliance with public act 103-100 regarding book bans. Saia stated that Suzanna Jones presented at the ISLAC meeting about the statewide EBSCO Database Package. Over 600 school and public librarians have attended training, and ISL is already receiving positive feedback about the savings libraries are experiencing. Regarding grant equity, there will potentially be some increases in construction grants and equalization grants. Efforts have begun to create a more level play field for construction grant applications. The Secretary of State is in the process of modernizing, starting with an overhaul of the Illinois Secretary of State website. As part of the modernization process, ISL hopes to implement an online grants management system to streamline grant applications, management, and reporting.

9. New Business

9.1 Annual Report

Harris reported the Annual Report is required as part of the Area and Per Capita Grant by the State Library as a report on the activities from the previous fiscal year. She said it is a detailed look at the accomplishments of RAILS organized by the Strategic Plan Goals. Board members commented on the amount of detail in the report and the fact that RAILS accomplishments are impressive. Hovanec moved for the approval of the FY 2024 Annual Report. Gregory seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

9.2 Disposal of Surplus Inventory

Hatch reported that there are 57 items on the list for disposal from the four RAILS service centers. He said the list includes old vehicles as well as miscellaneous office and tech equipment. The items will be posted in an online auction on the RAILS website. Filapek noted that the procedure for the disposal follows the Library System Act as well as the procedures for RAILS. Vancina moved for the approval of the Disposal of Surplus Inventory, Voitik seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

9.3 CTL Delivery Contract

Filapek outlined the possible changes to the CTL delivery contract, which is the company that does some of the delivery routes for RAILS. CTL gave RAILS several options and after looking at financial and operational perspectives staff have decided a hybrid approach is the best option. He said it would involve moving sorting for several routes to the staff at the Bolingbrook facility but that delivery would continue to be executed by CTL. He said they believe that this change would result in fewer sorting errors and would have no substantive changes to RAILS members. An analysis indicated that the savings from the revised CTL contract will exceed the anticipated expenditures for additional staff and space. Yanikoski asked about the rent costs of Bolingbrook versus buying a facility. Harris responded that it was not considered a viable option a few years ago but due to changes in the industry it should be revisited as an option in the near future.

9.4 New Member

Silva reported that Kinnikinnick CCSD #131 has requested membership in RAILS. Silva did a site visit and met with the superintendent and the school librarian. The district includes schools from K-8.

Caldicott moved that the Board accept Kinnikinnick CCSD #131 as a new RAILS member and send the request to the State Library for final approval. Milavec seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

9.5 Support of CARLI Statement on the Importance of Librarians in Academic Libraries

Harris reported that at the RAILS August meeting the situation at Western Illinois University was discussed with the layoff of most of their library staff. In conversations with ILA, AISLE, CARLI and IHLS they agreed that a joint statement would carry more weight. It was discussed at the Advocacy Committee as well. Caldicott commented that the committee agreed with the strength in numbers and noted that the CARLI statement is also before the AISLE board for approval as well. Robinson commented that the ILA Board has reviewed the statement and added its support in their last newsletter.

Voitik moved for RAILS approval to support the CARLI statement on the Importance of Librarians in Academic Libraries. The motion was seconded by Milavec and unanimously approved.

10. Board Development

10.1 Illinois Library Association

Robinson, Executive Director of the Illinois Library Association, said she knows so many people from RAILS who have served on various committees and boards at ILA and feels fortunate that Illinois has so many great leaders. Robinson gave an overview of the upcoming ILA Annual Conference which will be held in Peoria on October 8-10. Actor Nick Offerman will be the speaker for the Opening Session and Mychal Threets will be featured at the President's Program. Their Strategic Plan was adopted in May and included Strategies and Goals related to: Advocacy, Membership Engagement and ILA Organizational Health. The Public Policy Committee is a significant committee of ILA and is made up of 12 PPC members, with ex officio members from RAILS, IHLS, AISLE, CARLI, the State Library, and the chair of the ILA Intellectual Freedom Committee. The Committee works with lobbyist Derek Blaida, and ILA members submit legislative proposals, the committee reviews the proposals and then an agenda is referred to the ILA Executive Board. Some items on the 2025 Legislative Agenda include:

Compensation Reporting Requirements: asking for an increase in the threshold for reporting staff compensation packages from \$75,000 to \$100,000-150,000. As it stands, many new staff - at all levels, not just directors or managers - are hired at a salary and insurance package that exceeds the current limit. The amount should be increased on inflation alone.

Libraries Connected Broadband: The proposal is to have free internet to any public libraries in areas that are unserved and underserved by high-speed broadband, similar to K-12 schools as part of the Connect Illinois Act.

2024 Legislative Agenda

- HB 4224 Passed Amending Treasurer Bonds for Libraries
The requirement was changed from 50% to 10% of the total funds received by the library in the last fiscal year.

- HB 4111 Raising the Current Competitive Bidding Threshold
ILA wants to raise the bidding threshold from \$25,000 to \$35,000. Inflation alone would be reason enough for this legislative change, but it would also provide administrative burden relief and taxpayer savings. ILA hopes to include this bill in an omnibus bill in the final days of the 2024 session, in early January before the 2025 session begins.
- HB 4258 Equitable Access to Electronic Literary Materials Act
Electronic materials are expensive and patrons want more of them. There are many other states that are also trying to find ways to make ebooks and electronic resources more available and equitable for libraries. ILA anticipates they will be working on this legislation over the coming years.

The RAILS area Legislative Meetups are scheduled for: South Suburban and Chicago, West Suburban and Chicago, North Suburban and Chicago, Central Illinois, and Northwest Illinois. Details can be found here: <https://www.ila.org/events/legislative-meetups>

Jean Carroll left the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

11. Board Member Reports

Caldicott reported that author Huda Fahmy, with books like *Huda F are You?* is scheduled to visit the Vernon Hills High School in October. The students are excited to meet the author and have a chance to win books such as *Huda F Cares?* Hollister reported that ILA has approved the creation of the retired librarians forum and they will meet at the ILA conference. Milavec reported that the Downers Grove student library card program reports that 96% of students now have library cards.

12. Meeting recap and agenda building: RAILS board meeting Friday, October 25, 2024

Leyva reported that the next board meeting will be held On Friday, October 25, 2024. The agenda will include an overview of the RAILS Deal & Discounts from Leila Heath and Julie Tappendorf, from the law firm of Ancel Glink will talk about Legal Practices for Boards Around Social Media.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.