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March 12, 2025

**TO: RAILS Executive Committee**

**FROM: Monica Harris, Executive Director**

**SUBJECT: Draft Changes to the Procedure for Filling RAILS Board Vacancy**

In your packet is a draft Procedures for Filling Board Vacancies Between Elections, the current procedures (approved in 2014), and a list of suggestions for your consideration from RAILS Board President Rene Leyva. The Draft changes currently include those already determined by the Executive Committee at the meeting on January 15, 2025.

Additional changes for consideration by the Executive Committee include:

- The request to receive approval (as opposed to guidance) from the Illinois State Library in the case of a vacancy being held for an election.
- Whether we should define the limit for a “nearing” election or leave it more open ended.
- Whether it is important to address committee appointments
- Whether it is important to define strict timing versus a range on election duration, posting, and closing schedule.

We have also included a history of RAILS Nominating and Election Periods for your review.

After discussion the Executive Committee can choose to recommend the current draft to the RAILS Board for approval, make edits/changes to the draft, or return to this document at a later meeting once edits are made.

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## **Procedures for Filling Board Vacancies Between Elections**

When a RAILS Board of Directors seat becomes vacant between regular Board elections, the following process will be used to fill the vacancy:

### **Vacancies with Less Than Six Months Remaining OR RAILS Election is Nearing**

1. If a vacancy occurs with less than six (6) months remaining in the Board Member's term and/or the scheduled election is nearing, the seat will, due to time constraints and the desire for public engagement from the RAILS membership, be automatically placed on the ballot for the next scheduled election.
2. The Illinois State Library should be consulted when this option is available.

### **Vacancies with At Least Than Six Months Remaining in the Board Member's Term:**

1. RAILS staff will advertise the vacancy to RAILS members and seek replacement candidates. Eligible candidates will be limited to those who fit the criteria of the seat vacated (i.e., public library trustee, school library seat, etc.)
2. Candidates will provide to RAILS staff a resume or summary of their experience relevant to the RAILS Board position, and a paragraph of 100 words or less stating why they are interested in serving on the RAILS Board.
3. The RAILS Executive Committee will meet to review the candidates' resumes and statements.
4. Interviews of candidates may be held, and additional criteria may be considered when appropriate
5. Criteria to be used in selecting an individual to fill a vacant Board seat include:
  - Current geographical representation on the RAILS Board
  - Current representation of different sizes of libraries on the RAILS Board
  - Experience of the candidate in libraries and related organizations
  - Unique skills and talents of candidates compared to skills and talents of current Board members.
6. The Executive Committee will recommend a candidate to the full Board for approval.

### **Procedures for filling Board vacancies between elections**

When a RAILS Board of Directors seat becomes vacant between regular Board elections, the following process will be used to fill the vacancy:

1. RAILS staff will advertise the vacancy to RAILS members and seek replacement candidates. Eligible candidates will be limited to those who fit the criteria of the seat vacated (i.e., public library trustee, school library seat, etc.)
2. Candidates will provide to RAILS staff a resume or summary of their experience relevant to the RAILS Board position, and a paragraph of 100 words or less stating why they are interested in serving on the RAILS Board.
3. The RAILS Executive Committee will meet to review the candidates' resumes and statements.
4. Criteria to be used in selecting an individual to fill a vacant Board seat include:
  - Current geographical representation on the RAILS Board
  - Current representation of different sizes of libraries on the RAILS Board
  - Experience of the candidate in libraries and related organizations
  - Unique skills and talents of candidates compared to skills and talents of current Board members.
5. The Executive Committee will recommend a candidate to the full Board for approval.
6. Interviews of candidates may be held, and additional criteria may be considered as appropriate.

Approved by RAILS Board February 28, 2014

## **Suggestions from Rene Leyva**

### **Election for Vacant Seats:**

#### **1. General Requirement for Elections**

Any vacant board seat must be filled through an election to ensure member participation in the selection process.

#### **2. Vacancies with Less Than Six Months Remaining or Election is Nearing**

If a vacancy occurs with less than six (6) months remaining in the board member's term and/or the scheduled election is nearing, the seat will, due to time constraints and associated costs to the organization, be automatically placed on the ballot for the next scheduled election. This decision must receive approval from the Illinois State Library.

#### **3. More than one vacancy with Less Than Six Months Remaining or Election is Nearing**

If another vacancy arises during this process, the Executive Director will seek guidance from the Illinois State Library, particularly if the call for nominations for the scheduled election is nearing. This ensures an orderly and transparent process.

#### **4. Committee Appointments**

In cases where a vacancy must be filled before the next election, the Executive Committee may appoint a candidate after issuing a public call for self-nominations for the vacant board seat. The public call ensures transparency and equal opportunity for interested individuals. The appointment must then receive formal approval from the Illinois State Library to ensure compliance with governance standards.

These measures ensure transparency, prevent board appointments without proper member involvement.

#### **5. Consistency in Voting Periods**

All elections, including special elections, must have a standardized voting period to ensure consistency and fairness.

#### **6. Election Duration Options**

The election duration shall be either:

- Thirty (30) days, or
- Fifteen (15) days, depending on the urgency of the election.

#### **7. Posting and Closing Schedule**

Election notices must be posted on a Monday, with voting concluding on a Friday at 11:59 p.m. This schedule provides clarity and allows ample time for member participation.

History.of.RAILS.Nominating.and.Election.Periods.

Year	Nominating period	Duration	Election Period	Duration
2015	March 24-Apr 16	24 days	Apr 25-May 18	15 days
2016	March 1-March 31	31 days	Apr 25-May 11	17 days
2017	March 13-31	19 days	Apr 24-May 12	18 days
2018	March 7 -30	24 days	Apr 30-May 18	20 days
2019	March 6 -29	24 days	May 1-17	17 days
2020	March 2 – March 25	24 days	Apr 15-May 8	24 days
2021	March 8 – March 26	19 days	Apr 21-May 7	17 days
2022	March 23 – April 13	19 days	May 4 -20	15 days
2023	March 22 – April 21	31 days	May 8-May 24	17 days
2024	March 20-April 19	31 days	May 8 – May 24	17 days
2025	March 19-April 18	31 days	May 7 – May 23	17 days