



Approved 3/28/2025

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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, February 28, 2025 | 1:00 PM
RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

Minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Rene Leyva, RAILS Board President called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2025, at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.

2. Roll Call of Members

Fister called the roll of the Board members.

Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik

Zoom: Gwen Gregory, Emily Porter

Absent: Monica Caldicott

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Dan Bostrom, Sharon Swanson, Mark Hatch
Laura Nemeth, Emily Bailey-designated note taker

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

4. Public comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent agenda

5.1 Adoption of the Agenda

5.2 RAILS Board Minutes of January 24, 2024 Regular Meeting

5.3 Approval of Disbursements: January 2025— Sharon Swanson

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

Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, and Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

6. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported the financial reports ending January 31, 2024, an unassigned general fund (\$28.2 million) cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 23.9 months of budgeted FY2025 operations. General fund revenues through January of just over \$13.9 million were \$603,192 below budget primarily due to lower than budgeted revenues from the EBSCO group purchase; the revision of the LLSAP support grant formula and above-budget investment

income. General fund expenditures of nearly \$9.6 million through January were \$1,628,659 below budget primarily due to lower library materials (\$814,701), contractual services (\$349,636), vehicles (\$157,200), travel and continuing education (\$95,966), professional services (\$83,311), personnel (\$77,514), and lower expenditures in nearly all other cost categories. Swanson reported that the December fuel card invoice payment was overlooked in January and the past due amount for December was paid early in February with the normal January payment as soon as this oversight was discovered. RAILS incurred a \$4,039.40 finance charge on the outstanding balance and the Finance department has instituted a detailed monthly checklist as a part of our procedures to ensure that this type of oversight does not happen again.

7. Reports

7.1 Report from the RAILS President

Leyva reported Alex Vancina has agreed to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Julie Milavec will join him as will former Board member Tom Stagg, Stephanie Nissen from Rockford University, and Kathy Clark from the American Academy of Pediatrics. He said there are six seats up for election: Two at large seats: Julie Milavec and himself, one Special library seat: Catherine Yanikoski, Two three-year term Public library trustee seats: Dianne Hollister and Carolyn Sennett; and one two-year term Public library trustee seat to fill the vacancy of Anupam Goel.

7.2 RAILS Board Committee Reports

There were no additions or deletions to the Committee reports included in the packet.

7.3 RAILS Reports

7.3.1 RAILS Monthly Report

Harris gave a RAILS Funding Update stating that though some court challenges have been made to the recent Executive Orders, the fate of federal funding through many agencies remains unclear. RAILS has received many questions about the impacts of federal funding on RAILS and our library partners and we are keeping our members and staff informed through the February RAILS Minute, the Member Update on February 11, Board committee meetings, and our staff meeting on February 18. The RAILS Communication Team has also developed a new informational campaign, *RAILS: Numbers That Count*, that is intended to address the value that RAILS brings to Illinois. She will continue the lines of communication open and expects to learn more at the March ISLAC meeting about the Illinois State Library budget priorities.

Harris attended the Illinois Library Association's Public Policy Committee (PPC) meeting on February 3rd. Lobbyist Derek Blaida highlighted important deadlines for the state legislature and Governor Pritzker's address to introduce his proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 on Wednesday, February 19. The Illinois Library Association provided a list of bills that they are watching closely as the legislative season continues. There will be more detail shared at the next PPC meeting on Monday, March 3.

The following are key items to watch: [SB1741](#): Amends the School Code. Requires the State

Board of Education to establish and convene the Licensed School Librarian Task Force; [SB2124: Let America Read Act](#): Provides that the State Board of Education with oversight over the instructional materials used in public schools shall create a grievance procedure for challenges to instructional material; [Illinois Senate Joint Resolution 13](#): Creates the University Library & Professional Librarian Access & Transparency Task Force to examine the current state of libraries and professional librarianship on Illinois public university campuses; [SR0104](#): Urges all public library trustees to participate in ongoing training programs provided by the Illinois Secretary of State. Harris and Filapek met with representatives from IHLS, ILA and Niles-Maine Public Library District on February 10 to discuss the topic of public library trustee training. State Senator Laura Murphy (D – Des Plaines) has expressed interest in exploring legislation focused on trustee training.

7.3.2 RAILS Explore More Illinois Report

Barnes gave an update to the Explore More Illinois program. Explore More Illinois (EMI) is an online cultural and recreational pass open to Illinois public libraries. In 2024, 352 RAILS libraries and 94 IHLS libraries and all CPL locations participated. Users make online reservations from their personal devices. Attractions include museums, historical societies, performing arts centers, sporting events, botanical gardens, and park districts. Attraction offers include discounts on admission, parking, gift stores, and annual memberships. RAILS covers the licensing cost for the Explore More Illinois software. In 2025, Explore More Illinois will launch its new logo and marketing campaign in May 2025, and the “Explore More Illinois with Jessica” social media campaign.

7.4 Illinois State Library Report

Mandy Saia reported that the State Library received the reimbursement from the FY24 LSTA award and paid out the remaining funds to both IHLS and RAILS for their FY25 System Area and Per Capita awards. The status of IMLS funding in the FY25 federal budget reconciliation package that Congress is working on now, is unclear but will keep the systems abreast of any news. She said the School District Library Grant award letters will be sent soon and are in the process of reviewing 639 Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Grant applications. Illinois sales tax-exemption letters have all been issued. If anyone reports not receiving their certificate, please have them contact ISL immediately. She reported that public libraries across the state will soon be receiving an invitation to complete a Rural Library Service for Sustainability Survey. This survey is intended to explore the current rural library services that have been expanding to meet diversifying community needs and their impact on local communities. This is an IMLS-funded project that is being administered by Indiana University, and all libraries serving a population of under 25,000 are encouraged to complete the survey. The deadline to submit is March 14, 2025, and those completing the survey are entered into a drawing to receive an Amazon gift card.

8. New Business

8.1 RAILS investment portfolio review

Swanson explained the RAILS fiscal accountability policy requires that the RAILS Board review the investment portfolio twice a year to assess its effectiveness in meeting RAILS’ needs for the following: Safety, Liquidity, Rate of return, Diversification and General Performance. She

reviewed the list of investments and deposits as of January 31 and said RAILS reinvested the funds into four new two-year CD's earning an average rate of interest of 4.179%. The majority of RAILS's funds are held in liquid accounts with Hinsdale Bank & Trust other balances are split between the banks within Wintrust's network and mortgage-backed collateral that is held by a third party in RAILS's name. The remainder of the liquid portion of RAILS's funds are held in money market accounts with Illinois Funds and PMA which are both local government investment pools. RAILS' current investments consist of seventeen CD's as well as a small number of US Treasury Bonds that RAILS was bequeathed by a former Alliance Library System staff member.

8.2 Spring offsite Board meeting

Harris explained that holding Board meetings throughout the RAILS service area is a chance for members to network with the Board and the Board gets to visit other libraries. Different dates and possible venues were discussed. Emily Fister will check on availability and get back to the Board.

9. Board Development

9.1 Exploring options for future RAILS Board Development

Harris led a discussion on future topics for RAILS Board Development. Some suggestions were: recruitment and retention of Board members; advocacy; highlighting school libraries to increase their exposure, decorum at board meetings; board evaluation processes; and a deeper review of RAILS Deals & Discounts.

10. Board Member Reports

Hollister reported the ILA Retired Members Forum met and had a great discussion. She and a colleague will write an article for the ILA Reporter about the importance of connecting with other recent and current retirees. Hollister reported the Mclean Historical Society Library will host a dedication to the mural commemorating Lincoln's Lost Speech on May 29, 2025. Milavec reported on April 9, 2025 the Downers Grove Library foundation will host a fundraiser at Skeleton Key Brewing and they will also screen the documentary *Banned Together*. She said the Foundation is also planning quarterly meet ups at Alter Brewing. For more information see www.dgplfoundation.org.

11. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board meeting Friday, March 28, 2025. Leyva reported the next RAILS Board meeting will be on Friday, March 28, 2025. The March agenda will include RAILS Communications & Marketing Overview by Dan Bostrom and Brian Smith will present on Digital Accessibility.

12. Closed Session

Leyva stated the Board will move into closed session per 5 Illinois Compiled Statutes, chapter 120, paragraph 2 to discuss matters listed below: *Exceptions*. A public body may hold closed meetings to consider the following subjects:

(1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body;

(2) Collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees;

(11) Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending

Hollister moved for the Board to move into closed session. Voitik seconded and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, and Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

A 10 minute break was taken

At 2:32 p.m. the Board began the closed session meeting.

At 3:02 p.m. Milavec motioned that the Board return to open session. Voitik seconded and a roll call vote was taken. Yes: Jean Carroll, Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, and Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none. Absent: Monica Caldicott

13. Actions in Follow-up to Closed Session
None.

14. Adjourn
Leyva adjourned the meeting at 3:04 p.m.