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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, April 25, 2025 | 1:00 PM

Rockford Public Library

Draft minutes

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Rene Leyva, RAILS Board President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, April 25, 2025, at the Rockford Public Library.

2. Roll Call of Members

Fister called the roll of the Board members.

Rockford Public Library: Monica Caldicott, Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski

Burr Ridge: Amanda Kowalcze-arrived at 1:10 p.m.

Absent: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Hovanec

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Leyva thanked the Rockford Public Library for hosting the networking lunch and meeting. He said they all enjoyed the tour of the newly renovated buildings. He thanked the library staff for their hospitality and congratulated them on the beautiful building.

Guests in Rockford: Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Dan Bostrom, Sharon Swanson, Mark Hatch Leila Heath, Anne Slaughter, Kate Niehoff, Sam Daly, Ryan Hebel, Mary Hudspeath, Kourtney Green, Anna Behm, Stacy Palmisano, Renya Krempf, Megan Gove

Guests in Burr Ridge: Laura Nemeth

Guests on Zoom: Greg McCormick, Jessica Silva, Emily Bailey, designated note taker

4. Public comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent agenda

5.1 Adoption of the Agenda

5.2 RAILS Board Minutes of March 28, 2025 Regular Meeting

5.3 Approval of Disbursements: March 2025– Sharon Swanson

Voitik moved and Milavec seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Monica Caldicott, Jenny Cutshall, Gwen Gregory, Dianne Hollister, Amanda Kowalcze, Rene Leyva, Julie Milavec, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

6. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported the financial reports ending March 31, 2025, an unassigned general fund (\$28.5 million) cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 24.1 months of budgeted FY2025 operations. General fund revenues through March Over \$16.4 million were approximately \$1.4 million above budget primarily due to the receipt of the Federal portion of the Area and Per Capita Grant in February and above-budget investment income. RAILS was awarded a total of \$213,625 of unbudgeted special grant funding to support the ongoing development and enhancement of L2 and the world language cataloging services program. RAILS's general fund expenditures through March were approximately \$1.8 million below budget primarily due to below budget Library Materials expenditures from group purchases and below budget Contractual Services expenditures. As fraud attempts and impersonation attempts increase and become increasingly hard to detect, RAILS Finance is focusing on tightening and expanding our procedures to verify changes in vendor remittance information. RAILS is at the end of our five-year agreement with our auditing firm, Lauterbach and Amen and has solicited proposals from seven firms. More information will be presented at the next board meeting

7. Reports

7.1 Report from the RAILS President

Leyva reported that he attended the town hall meeting of Congressman Jonathan Jackson to advocate for libraries in Illinois. He had an opportunity to invite the Congressman to tour RAILS and the Bolingbrook facility to show how RAILS provides meaningful and vital resources to libraries in his district and his constituents.

7.2 RAILS Board Committee Reports – Committee Chairs

There were no other additions to the reports.

7.2.1 Advocacy Committee – Jean Carroll

7.2.2 Consortia Committee – Alex Vancina

7.2.3 Executive Committee – Rene Leyva

7.2.3 Nominating Committee – Alex Vancina

7.2.4 Policy Committee – Gwen Gregory

7.2.5 Resource Sharing Committee – Julie Milavec

7.2.6 Universal Service Committee – Catherine Yanikoski

7.3 RAILS Reports

7.3.1 RAILS Monthly Report

Harris' written report contains updates regarding funding and IMLS, and for further updates members should visit the RAILS Pulse Page under [IMLS Advocacy](#); the page includes the joint statement with AISLE, CARLI, IHLS, ILA, and RAILS; a link to the recording of the [RAILS Online Event: Advocating for Libraries](#) held Wednesday, April 23. RAILS Board President Rene Leyva was interviewed for a story for the Sun-Times and RAILS also spoke with WGN, and with the Tribune for an upcoming story. The Illinois Library Association continually updates their [bill monitoring list](#) and positions on their website, and that is the best place to check for updates and developments. She will attend the International Coalition of Library

Consortia (ICOLC) meeting in Chicago on May 4 – 7 and will co-host a breakout session for Executive Directors. RAILS Delivery and Facilities Director Mark Hatch will help to host a breakout on physical materials delivery. RAILS developed our first member facing [RAILS Annual Report](#). and it was published on April 8. This report, which was a collaboration between the RAILS Marketing & Communications team and the Data team, has lots of support from individuals all over RAILS. The report is intended to provide valuable data and visuals that help our members to understand our impact on Illinois libraries

7.3.2 eRead Illinois Update -Anna Behm

Behm gave an update on the e-content is available for all types of libraries. Eread Illinois is hosted on the Boundless platform and has 31 Academic, 288 public, 571 school buildings and 5 special members. There were over 477,700 circulations in 2024. Inkie.org library is available to everyone in Illinois at no cost, no library card required. Inkie.org also hosts a suite of self-publishing tools and resources that was used to create over 515 ebooks in 2024.

7.4 Illinois State Library Report

McCormick reported that the Secretary of State's budget hearings for FY 2026 have concluded in both the House and Senate. Some anticipated increases in funding for the Libraries on Literacy programs as well as continued support for equalized funding that was approved by the General Assembly last year. These requests were made well before the federal funding news. IMLS is still unresolved, though Illinois along with 47 states, received partial awards, though not the complete allotment for FY24 Grants to States programs. The State Library is moving forward with library system funding for next year. Leyva thanked McCormick and his team for their continued support and efforts on behalf of Illinois Libraries.

8. New Business

8.1 Capital Assessment Review (discussion only) – Joe Filapek and Mark Hatch

Filapek reported that during the February 2024 RAILS Board meeting, reps from Building Technology Consultants (BTC) presented a broad overview of the capital needs assessment for our Burr Ridge facility. This analysis assists RAILS in planning for anticipated capital expenditures over the next twenty years based on their condition evaluation and projection of replacement costs. Hatch said all projects are in one of four categories and gave examples of each:

Completed: Burr Ridge facility: sidewalk and patio concrete and safety fencing; leaking patio doors/windows; dumpster fencing;

Deferred: preventive maintenance to prolong the life of mechanical projects; instead of replacement of the entire parking lot, it was resealed and restriped, at a cost of \$4k vs. 60k;

Current for FY25: electrical scan of cameras; repair precast wall panels that are now uneven due to the rusting of metal plates; switching out manual locks at 2 service centers;

Future projects FY26: Replacement of water chiller, heating elements, ceiling tiles. Most of the items are original to the building, but will continue to do maintenance and extend the life of as many items as possible.

There was some discussion about moving and selling the Burr Ridge building versus fixing for the future use. Harris said moving or selling and looking at a different property for the main facility for RAILS is a future decision that will depend upon how the expenses come down the line.

8.2 FY2026 Budget Planning

Harris reported Illinois State Library has instructed us to develop a budget based on level funding levels of \$11,871,714 from the System Area and Per Capita Grant. This does not include additional projected revenue consisting chiefly of reimbursement revenue (including E-Rate), fees from services and materials (including eRead Illinois and the ILDS contract) and investment income of approximately \$650,000. We will include a draft operational plan in the May meeting packet. We are anticipating interest income to be at 2.9%, which was the lowest of the range of projections that were published following their March meeting.

Some of the anticipated expenses increases:

- the additional lease for Suite D in Bolingbrook and the contract extension of our existing space at Bolingbrook (contract commenced in FY2025) is \$70,722 more than was budgeted in FY2025.

- Commercial insurance costs are expected to increase 10%, which is equal to the FY2025 increase.

- Capital assessment needs at our facilities include updates to grid and drop panels around lighting, asphalt replacement, server room reconfiguration, carpet and office furniture replacement, and electronic lock and fob systems for consistency across locations. Two commuter fleet vehicles are scheduled for replacement, replacing vehicles from 2006 and 2014.

- Delivery infrastructure needs: Blue bin replacement is needed. Working with GeoMARC on another routing analysis possible routing efficiencies across the service area.

- Two delivery vans are scheduled for replacement at our Rockford location.

- Laptop replacement is planned for FY2026 at a cost of \$120,000. These purchases are not included in the current limited tariffs that are in force

- the [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\)](#) numbers for April 2025 should be released on May 13, 2025.

Dependent on those April figures, we expect to present personnel projections for wages and benefits expenditures at a 4% COLA. HR Source recommends a recommended 2.27% adjustment to all pay grades for FY2026, which is an increase from previous years.

- Healthcare costs continue to increase, with an overall increase of roughly 11% for this year.

There are also projected increases of 9% for dental insurance and 2% for vision.

- RAILS has implemented background checks for all new hires, which will result in an increase. Our workers compensation program is also recommending a physical examination at point of hire for all positions that have physical requirements. The cost of examinations varies by location, but this would be an additional increase that may be offset by the potential cost of claims.

8.3 Certification report 2025

Silva thanked the certification team for their proactive efforts of emails, phone calls and a physical letter to all members to assist them in completing certification. Some members' situations change, they are no longer open or have staff or funding issues;. She presented a list of members recommended for withdrawal or suspension due to lack of response or failure to certify. Porter moved and Gregory seconded to approve the members recommended for withdrawal and suspension to send to the Illinois State Library for final approval. The motion was unanimously approved.

8.4 Executive Director Evaluation

Leyva said his memo regarding the Executive Director Evaluation was included in the packet. The evaluation is in a survey format, and he will send a link to the survey after this meeting. Board members are asked to complete the survey by Thursday, May 15. The results will be compiled and forwarded to the Board. At the June meeting, the evaluation will be discussed, and the Board will determine any change in compensation for the Executive Director, to coincide with changes in compensation for all other RAILS staff at the start of the new fiscal year.

9. Board Development

9.1 Human Resources

The RAILS has three members on its team and they focus on five internal areas: Talent Acquisition & Retention; Policy Development & Compliance; Compensation & Benefits; Performance Management; and Employee Relations. They are currently working on the following projects as well: Employee Handbook Review; Visual onboarding presentation, and working with IT to create a performance management database platform.

10. Board Member Reports

Voitik reported that the parking lot for the Shorewood-Troy Public Library District is now completed and people are parking in it! Milavec announced that registration is open for the 2025 Directors University. This professional development is intended for first-time directors and directors new to Illinois from public libraries of all shapes and sizes. She thanked the Illinois State Library for its continued support in underwriting this training. Caldicott announced that her school library is closing for May for testing, but they will hold a big book check-out party on Friday, and kids can get up to 10 books that are not due until the first day of classes next year. Hollister announced that Bloomington hosted a documentary screening of Frozen and Forgotten, about the unhoused population in the Bloomington-Normal area. She said it was so eye-opening and recommends for all: <https://www.wglt.org/frozen-and-forgotten>.

11. Meeting recap and agenda building for the next RAILS Board meeting Friday, May 23, 2025.
Due to the Memorial Day weekend, the meeting will start at 10:00 a.m.
12. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.