
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, July 25, 2025 | 1:00 PM
RAILS Burr Ridge
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Gwen Gregory, RAILS Vice President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, July 25, 2025, at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.

2. Roll Call of Members

Palmisano called the roll of the Board members.

RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall (arrived at 1:25 pm), Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski.

Absent: Monica Caldicott, Ron Holohan

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests at Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Jessica Silva, Lauran Nemeth, Ola Gronski, Ryan Hebel, Sam Daly, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker)

Guests on Zoom: Mandy Saia, Leila Heath, Kate Niehoff, Anne Slaughter, Melissa Hall (joined at 2:15 pm)

4. Public comments

There were no public comments.

5. Oath of office and election of officers

5.1. Newly Elected Board Members - Oath of Office

Gregory read the oath of office to the new RAILS Board members: Megan Gove, Roberta Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Yolande Wilburn, and Catherine Yanikoski. All four were sworn in as RAILS Board members.

5.2. Election of Officers

Vancina announced the slate of officers recommended by the RAILS' Nominating Committee as follows:

Gwen Gregory, President

Catherine Yanikoski, Vice President

Jean Carroll, Secretary

Amanda Kowalcze, Treasurer

The floor was then open for nominations. No additional officer nominations were presented. Porter moved that the slate be approved as presented. Gove seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. All congratulated the new officers of the RAILS board.

The newly elected President, Gwen Gregory, took over as Chair of the meeting.

6. Consent agenda

6.1. Adoption of the Agenda

6.2. RAILS Board Minutes of June 20, 2025 Regular Meeting

6.3. RAILS Board Minutes of June 20, 2025 Closed Session Meeting

6.4. Approval of Disbursements: June 2025 - Sharon Swanson

6.5. RAILS Board meeting schedule for FY2026

Parks moved to approve the consent agenda. Voitik seconded, and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

7. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson discussed the financial reports for June 2025. The FY2025 audited financial reports will be presented at the September board meeting after the conclusion of the annual audit and as a component of the Annual Report to the Illinois State Library. Swanson reported that the General fund revenues through June of \$17,979,703 were \$110,340 above budget, primarily due to the recording of the Bolingbrook lease extension and expansion, which created lease proceeds revenue offset by corresponding capital outlay expenditures. The above budget revenues are partially offset by below-budget revenues for implementing the statewide database package and selecting EBSCO as the vendor. With fuel prices remaining below what had been anticipated, the fuel surcharge that is a part of the ILDS agreement with the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) has been less than anticipated. Additionally, investment income has been higher than anticipated due to interest rates remaining higher than initially expected. Contractual services expenditures were below budget primarily due to the change in the contract with our delivery outsourcing vendor to move sorting services to the RAILS Bolingbrook service center. In June, legal expenditures were below budget due to less than anticipated work related to the collective bargaining agreement renegotiation process for our covered staff. As a part of organization-wide succession and contingency planning, RAILS purchased two fire safes to house the facility plans, blueprints, deeds, titles, treasury bonds, check stock, and signature stamps.

8. Reports

8.1. Report from the RAILS President

Gregory had no report.

8.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports - Committee Chairs

8.2.1. Advocacy Committee – To be determined

8.2.2. Consortia Committee - To be determined

8.2.3. Executive Committee - President of the Board

8.2.4. Policy Committee – Vice President of the Board

8.2.5. Resource Sharing Committee - To be determined

8.2.6. Universal Service Committee - To be determined

Nothing additional was added to the committee report document found in the packet.

8.3. RAILS Monthly Report

Harris congratulated Julie Milavec, a former RAILS board member, on the Librarian of the Year award from the Illinois Library Association (ILA). Also shared was that ILA has awarded the 2025 Intellectual Freedom Award to the Unite Against Book Bans Regional Response Team. The partners on this team include AISLE, CARLI, IHLS, ILA, and RAILS. Highlighted from the monthly report is the announcement that on June 27, the Supreme Court upheld the Universal Service Fund, which funds the E-Rate program, that extends libraries and schools billions of dollars each year for broadband access and connectivity. Harris encouraged board members to review the My Library Is.. blog posts showing how Illinois libraries have used federal IMLS funds. Aaron Skog, Director at SWAN, was named chairperson of the ILA Public Policy Committee. Harris reported that in August, Congressman Sean Casten will visit the RAILS' Bolingbrook service center to get a tour and an overview of the RAILS delivery service. The top three RAILS programs/services for June are the inaugural leadership program, Catalyst, the season one finale of the *Can't Shelve This* podcast, and the July 1 start date for the *Chicago Tribune* digital access product. Lastly, Harris reported that a draft of a digital accessibility statement for the RAILS website was shared with RAILS attorneys for legal review. The RAILS staff Digital Accessibility Committee is reviewing the attorney's recommended changes and will post the document to the website soon.

8.4. Illinois State Library Report

From the Illinois State Library, Mandy Saia reported that Liz Toft was named the new Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Coordinator. The Project Next Generation grants have been approved, and the subsequent fund report is due on August 15. Saia thanked RAILS for a well-done FY2026 System Area Per Capita Grant application. Lastly, Saia reported that the system's Annual Report information will be emailed next week.

9. New business

9.1. New Members

Silva presented two libraries for full RAILS membership. SAE Institute is an academic library in Chicago. The Chicago campus has 236 students, and over a thousand students are enrolled nationally. Classes taught include general education courses required in an Associate's program, such as art history, math, science, and English communication. The second library seeking full membership is Shirland School District 134. Shirland has around 100 students in grades K-8, located in Winnebago County in Shirland, IL. Voitik moved to accept SAE Institute in Chicago and Shirland School District 134 in Shirland to full membership in RAILS, with final approval requested from the Illinois State Library. Hovanec seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

9.2. Board Committee Assignments

Gregory asked the members to review the committee assignments list and select which committee they would join. Harris encouraged each member to participate in at least one committee. Cutshall and Sennett volunteered for the Policy Committee while Porter volunteered for the Advocacy Committee. Additionally, Hovanec stepped in to serve as the OMA contact, and Vancina as the FOIA contact. Harris mentioned that the Universal Service Committee is working on a new project, the Advocacy Committee is looking to begin an active project, and the Policy Committee is updating the RAILS Employee Handbook policies. Board members were asked to contact Palmisano with their committee decision.

9.3. Election of at-large member to Executive Committee

Gregory asked for approval to appoint Yolande Wilburn as the at-large member of the Executive Committee.

Vancina moved to appoint Wilburn to the at-large seat on the Executive Committee. Kowalcze seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

9.4. Executive Director Goals FY2026

Harris presented her FY2026 goals to the board as the RAILS Executive Director. The goals were developed from board suggestions submitted during the Executive Director's FY2025 evaluation. Wilburn commented that the goals were robust and appropriate. There was a discussion on rewording goal number four for clarification. Porter moved to approve the FY2026 Executive Director goals with the amended language on goal number four. Wilburn seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

10. Board Development

10.1. RAILS Financial report and budget

Swanson gave an overview of RAILS' finances, including financial reports, budgets, fraud awareness, and the board members' role in financial oversight. RAILS is a modified accrual accounting organization with three fund types: general, capital projects, and special review funds. Swanson explained which expenditures fall under each fund, summarized the information in the monthly financial reports, and reviewed the RAILS investments. The cash position report, which has a goal of 18 months of cash coverage in the general fund, was reviewed. Next, Swanson gave the board tips on how to read the Revenue and Expenditures reports. Part of the presentation included a review of the budget and the budget process, noting the percentage of expenditures. RAILS is a service organization with staff having the highest budget item. The topic of Fraud awareness was also reviewed. Lastly, a detailed list of the board's fiscal oversight responsibilities was discussed.

11. RAILS Board Member Reports

Wilburn reported that the Evanston Public Library is currently doing a cost analysis study to become independent from the city of Evanston. Yanikoski talked about a library research project at Engineering Systems, Inc. that assisted in successfully getting a government recall.

12. Meeting recap and agenda building

The next Board meeting will be held on Friday, August 22, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. The agenda will include the RAILS' Communication department as the Service of the Month. The Board Development topic will be an overview of school libraries, with guest Carolyn Kinsella. Sharon Swanson will also give the biannual investment portfolio review.

13. Closed Session

Gregory announced that the Board will move into closed session to discuss matters pertaining to the following, as per 5 Illinois Compiled Statutes, chapter 120, paragraph 2, section 2 c(21), to discuss matters listed below:

Exceptions. A public body may hold closed meetings to consider the following subjects:

(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;

Porter motioned that the Board move into closed session. Voitik seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

A 10-minute break was taken.

Wilburn motioned that the Board return to open session. Hovanec seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

14. Actions in follow-up to closed session

Gove moved to approve the agreement between RAILS and the Teamsters Union No. 325. Parks seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

15. Adjourn

Gregory adjourned the meeting at 2:49 pm.