

RAILS Special Board Meeting Orientation

July 25, 2025 | 9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.

RAILS Burr Ridge

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Gwen Gregory, RAILS Vice President, called the meeting to order at 9:30 am on Friday, July 25, 2025.

Palmisano called the roll of the RAILS Board members.

Burr Ridge: Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Yolande Wilburn

Absent: Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Ron Holohan, Jennifer Hovanec, Catherine Yanikoski

2. Guests and Public Comments

Guests in Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Ola Gronski, Jessica Silva, Anne Slaughter, Kate Niehoff, Sharon Swanson, Sam Daly, Ryan Hebel, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker)

Guests on Zoom: Leila Heath

3. Welcome and Introductions

Harris introduced herself and welcomed the Board members to the RAILS Board orientation. Each board member introduced themselves and discussed how they became board members.

4. Introduction to Library Systems

A video was presented on the history of RAILS, which began in 2011 after several Illinois library systems merged. The video also included the RAILS Board job description, Board committee list, and information on the RAILS' service centers, RAILS programs, and services. The RAILS strategic plan was highlighted within the video. RAILS staff introduced each department and gave a brief overview of their work. Harris reviewed each document within the meeting packet, including best practices on being a Board member. Each RAILS Board committee's charge was included in the packet, and Harris briefly described each committee's work. Highlights from the RAILS FY2026 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application were presented at the meeting, including programs such as the debut of the RAILS Catalyst leadership training program, the further development of the RAILCAR data

collection and analysis related to LLSAPs and library automation, the new learning platform with Niche Academy, and the School Library Advocacy Through Education (SLATE) data dashboard. RAILS delivery was discussed, such as the future purchase of two new vehicles, the exploration of updating reporting options for the quarterly delivery count, looking at innovations for the next ILDS delivery service contract, and researching delivery efficiencies. Harris next talked about each of the RAILS' programs: Deals & Discounts, eRead Illinois, Explore More Illinois, Find More Illinois, and RAILS' support of the Illinois State Library's Statewide Database Program. Harris wrapped up the presentation by discussing the many equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives at RAILS, and also highlighted the numerous grants that RAILS offers to the membership. The remaining documents in the packet were reviewed, and the Board was encouraged to read the documents to gain knowledge about the bylaws, administrative code & rules, and the Library System Act.

5. Board Meetings 101

5.1. Where to Attend

As an Illinois library system with a large geographical area represented, RAILS Board members can attend board and committee meetings in person or virtually and be counted toward a quorum. Board members can attend in person at a RAILS service center, either Burr Ridge or East Peoria. Another way to attend is virtually at a location in a public building, such as a library that is open to the public. A quorum is essential to hold both board and committee meetings; if either type of meeting does not reach a quorum, the meeting will be cancelled. The Zoom virtual meeting platform is used.

5.2. Board Ethics

At this point in the meeting, the Board Ethics video was presented.

5.3. Travel Reimbursement Form

The travel reimbursement form was reviewed by Palmisano. The board members are encouraged to complete the form soon after the meeting and email it to Palmisano to process payment.

5.4. How to Participate and Contribute to Board Meetings

Harris reviewed how a Board member can participate in a meeting by responding to a motion. The members were encouraged to ask questions during meetings.

5.5. Videoconference Locations And Sensitive Microphones

Palmisano mentioned that the microphones used during meetings are sensitive and asked that people refrain from having side conversations. The meetings are recorded and shared on the RAILS YouTube page.

6. Email Accounts for RAILS Board Members

6.1. Why a Separate Email Account is Needed

Due to RAILS being subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Board members must use their RAILS email address, not their work or personal addresses. Regarding a FOIA request, RAILS IT staff will pull emails to fulfill the requirements. Otherwise, a Board member must supply the information from their work or personal emails.

6.2. Importance of Checking Email Regularly and Responding Promptly

RAILS staff will communicate regularly between meetings that may require a timely reply. Palmisano expressed the importance of reviewing the RAILS emails and asked the Board members to look at them diligently. Board members are welcome to contact the RAILS' IT Department by emailing the help email (help@railslibraries.org) and asking for assistance in setting up notifications when an email is sent to their RAILS email account.

6.3. Adhering to the Open Meetings Act (OMA)

6.3.1. Open Meetings Act Certification

All elected officials in Illinois, including RAILS Board members, must complete OMA training. Copies of the training certificate are to be sent to Palmisano. Harris talked about the importance of not replying all to any email sent to board members. Replying all, with more than two Board members on the email, violates the Open Meetings Act by becoming a meeting.

7. Q&A/Open Discussion

7.1. Buddy System

Anyone interested in being a Board mentor or a mentee is encouraged to contact Gregory or Harris.

7.2. Other

Board members had an opportunity to ask any follow-up questions about the material covered in the orientation.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.