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**REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING**

Friday, October 24, 2025 | 1:00 PM  
RAILS Burr Ridge  
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

**MINUTES**

1. Welcome and Call to Order  
Gwen Gregory, RAILS President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, October 24, 2025, at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.
2. Roll Call of Members  
Palmisano called the roll of the Board members.  
RAILS Burr Ridge: Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Emily Porter, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski  
RAILS East Peoria: Ron Holohan, Roberta Parks, Alex Vancina  
Evanston Public Library: Jennifer Hovanec  
Absent: Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements  
Guests at Burr Ridge: Dan Bostrom, Joe Filapek, Alice Grabowski, Monica Harris, Leila Heath, Galin Iliev, Kate Niehoff, Laura Nemeth, Stacy Palmisano (designated notetaker), Anne Slaughter, Wes Smith, Kortni Springer, Maggie Thomann  
Guests on Zoom: Mark Hatch, Ryan Hebel, Mark Shaffer
4. Public comments  
There were no public comments.
5. Consent agenda – Gwen Gregory, President
  - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
  - 5.2. RAILS Board Minutes of September 26, 2025, Regular Meeting
  - 5.3. Approval of Disbursements: September 2025  
Porter moved to approve the consent agenda. Gove seconded, and a roll call vote was taken: Ayes: Monica Caldicott, Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Ron Holohan, Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Alex Vancina, Yolande Wilburn, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none
6. RAILS Financial Report  
Swanson reported that general fund revenues through September of \$2.55M were above budget, primarily due to greater participation than anticipated in the EBSCO group

purchase. Beginning in FY2026, RAILS will record activity related to the L2 Development, World Language Cataloging Services, and the Cook County Digital Equity Grants within the Special Revenue fund. At the end of October, RAILS plans to submit the first request for reimbursement to Cook County for staff time spent working on the Cook County Digital Equity Grant. General fund expenditures of \$4M through September were below budget primarily due to below-budget personnel, contractual services, supplies, postage, printing, travel, continuing education, professional services, and vehicle expenses. The above-budget library materials, buildings and grounds partially offset these. Swanson reported that on October 9, a payment from the RAILS System Area Per Capita Grant was received earlier than expected.

## 7. Reports

### 7.1. Report from the RAILS President

Gregory congratulated the RAILS staff on their great work at the following conferences: the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), the Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI).

### 7.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports

Porter recognized Yanikoski for presenting at the ILA conference on Universal Service. Yanikoski commented that the session was well attended and that there were many great questions.

### 7.3. RAILS Reports

#### 7.3.1. RAILS Monthly Report

Harris thanked the Board members who joined staff in the RAILS booth at the ILA Annual Conference. Harris attended the CARLI Annual Conference on October 21, where they celebrated their 20th Anniversary by having a panel of past staff to discuss how CARLI was formed. At the October 23 Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) meeting, the Secretary of State's budget, the state's contract with OCLC, Find More Illinois, and E-Rate in Illinois libraries were discussed. Harris noted that the Illinois Senate Resolution 107, which was adopted in a veto session on Thursday, October 23, encourages library trustee training. This is separate from the ILA Executive Board's support for a resolution requiring trustee training. Harris also highlighted that the ILA Executive Board approved exploration of an increase of 20% in the Library System Area & Per Capita Grants and the Public Per Capita & School District Grants to reflect the changes in inflation. Board members had the opportunity to add their comments about the ILA conference as well as the new Libraries Count: Data Pre-Conference. Registration for the pre-conference required

registration for the ILA conference, which was discussed as a barrier. Continuing the discussion on legislative priorities, Harris highlighted that ILA's Public Policy Committee announced two new special working groups will be formed as part of the ILA Public Policy Committee: a study group on Personal Property Replacement Tax (PPRT), and a study group on the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Regarding digital accessibility, RAILS falls under the category of a Special District Government, which means that the digital compliance deadline for RAILS is April 2027. Harris announced that there will be a RAILS Member Update on November 12 and encouraged board members to attend. Also, board members were urged to participate in one of the upcoming ILA Legislative Meetups held in November and December. Lastly, the November 21 RAILS Board meeting will be held in person at the Galesburg Public Library in Galesburg, IL.

#### 7.3.2. Service of the Month: Deals & Discounts

Kortni Springer and Maggie Thomann, both Library Resource Specialists, presented on the RAILS Deals & Discounts program. The team estimates libraries have saved approximately \$2M by leveraging deals through economies of scale and vendor relationships. There are 388 participating libraries in the program, with the majority being public libraries. There are over 50 opt-in deals with discounted resources for all library types. A new member advisory group will help gauge library interest in potential vendors, and a new deals and discounts email list will soon be announced. Springer and Thomann regularly host webinars for member libraries to present new deals and answer library questions.

#### 7.4. Illinois State Library Report

Mark Shaffer, a representative from the Illinois State Library, announced that the School District Library Grants were due on October 15, and the Live and Learn Construction Grant program is open with a January 15, 2026, deadline. Shaffer reported that the Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Grant is now aligned with the new public library standards and is due on January 30, 2026. Shaffer also announced that Illinois public libraries that originated as Carnegie libraries may be eligible for a \$10K grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

### 8. New business

#### 8.1. eRead Illinois Update

Harris and Heath gave the board an update on eRead Illinois with the news of the closing of Baker & Taylor, the vendor for eRead Illinois. Harris talked about the background of ERead Illinois and expressed the importance of the program as a vital resource, saying that the priority is that it will be interrupted as little as possible. Heath

announced that the entire eRead Illinois collection will migrate to a new platform, the Palace Project, managed by Lyasis. The new platform will be able to aggregate e-books and audiobooks from other platforms in the Palace Project app. The timeline for the project was discussed along with the projected goal of December 2, being the launch date of the Palace Project app, and the availability of ERead Illinois to the participating academic, public, and special libraries and their patrons. K-12 libraries not in a catalog consortium will be onboarded to the Palace Project beginning in December. Harris acknowledged Leila Heath, Joe Filapek, and Anna Behm for their hard work and dedication to eRead Illinois.

## 9. Board Development

### 9.1. Cybersecurity for Libraries

Smith gave a presentation on cybersecurity, a major issue that affects libraries. Topics discussed included ransomware attacks, the importance of strong passwords and two-factor authentication, data encryption, and regular software updates. Staff awareness training and regular risk assessments are encouraged. Smith talked about new phishing scams like “smishing”, phishing through text messaging, “spear phishing”, phishing coming from within an organization, and also “vishing”, video phishing. In closing, Smith encouraged the extra step of verifying requests before falling for a scam on any questionable notifications.

## 10. RAILS Board Member Reports

Parks announced that the Peoria Public Library has a new strategic plan, and Holohan shared that the Dunlap Public Library has a new Director, Amy Edgar. And Gove shared that the Talcott Free Library District recently received a generous monetary gift that will help pay off debt from a recent expansion.

## 11. Meeting recap and agenda building

The next RAILS board meeting will be on Friday, November 21, at 1:00 p.m. at the Galesburg Public Library in Galesburg, Illinois. Before the meeting, there will be a tour of the Galesburg Public Library and a networking lunch. The agenda will include a report by the RAILS Continuing Education & Consulting team, an update on compliance with laws, and an overview of academic libraries with guest Carolyn Ciesla.

## 12. Adjourn

Gregory adjourned the meeting at 3:01 pm.