

Draft Minutes

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

November 13, 2025 | 4:00 p.m.

RAILS Burr Ridge and Videoconference Sites

125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527 | 630.734.5000

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Carroll welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call of Members

Grabowski called the roll of the committee members.

RAILS Burr Ridge: Jean Carroll, Ron Holohan

Cook Memorial Public Library District (Aspen Drive Library): Monica Caldicott

Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen, Emily Porter

Shorewood-Troy Public Library District: Karen Voitik

Absent: Carolyn Sennett, Yolande Wilburn

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Joe Filapek, Alice Grabowski (designated notetaker),

Monica Harris, Stacy Palmisano

Guests via Zoom: Dan Bostrom, Anne Craig, Gwen Gemmell, Ryan Hebel

Harris announced that Catherine Yanikoski has moved to another RAILS committee. She thanked

Yanikoski for her service to the committee since August 2023.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda – Jean Carroll (action requested)

5.1. Adoption of the Agenda

5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of September 11, 2025

Caldicott moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Holohan seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. New Business

6.1. Advocacy for Academic Libraries

Anne Craig, Senior Director at The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), presented on the topic of the current state of academic libraries, the potential future of these libraries, and on the statement "Free Speech Needs Free Libraries: A Joint Statement of CARLI, Orbis Cascade Alliance, and the Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation (PALCI)." The intent was to spark conversations on free speech, the freedom to read, academic freedom, and censorship. In 2026, CARLI, Orbis Cascade Alliance, and PALCI will host a series of 6 programs to highlight different ways members can communicate with consortia regarding Freedom to Read and Freedom to Access Information. The challenges academic libraries are facing include budget constraints, enrollment declines, and the limit of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives. The higher education landscape is expected to face challenges in the coming years; therefore, the need for grants and funding is essential. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has not been requiring libraries for academic institutions, and no standard requirements are set. The focus on the central issue in Higher Ed that libraries matter in the lives of students and in their success is critical. Craig was inspired by the Data conference hosted by RAILS in October of 2025. The use of data to amplify intellectual freedom is necessary to advocate for academic libraries.

It was recommended to bring this published statement to the RAILS Board of Trustees at the November 2025 meeting to adopt this statement.

7. Reports

7.1. Institute of Museum and Library Services Update

Harris discussed the update released by the American Library Association's (ALA) Public Policy and Advocacy Committees regarding the reopening of government operations. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will resume administering state library grants. Libraries continue to receive funding at 2025 levels; the 2026 budget is still pending. Nine of the twelve spending bills still need to be passed before 2/1/2026. Additionally, continuing advocacy through federal legislators on the topics of increased library funding, public library trustee training, and access to eBooks and audiobooks is necessary.

7.2. Illinois Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris reported that the Public Policy Committee (PPC) of the Illinois Library Association (ILA) met on November 3, 2025. One issue approved by the Illinois Library Association Executive Board as a legislative priority is funding libraries which covers the importance of confirming the approval of state appropriations that are asked for by the Secretary of State and a request to increase the library systems area and per capita grant: public per capita grant/school district grant by 20% (due to inflation). Additionally, Filapek had proposed a request to the ILA Public Policy Committee (PPC) for the required public library trustee training. The ILA Executive Board also prioritized a proposal that encourages \$3 million of open educational resource funding in support of academic institutions.

RAILS staff have created a reference document regarding making eBooks equitable and accessible for reference at the upcoming Legislative Meetups.

The PPC recently established subcommittees to review the topics of personal property replacement tax disbursements, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and the Library Records of Confidentiality Act group.

7.3. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Caldicott summarized the AISLE (Association of Illinois School Library Educators) Advocacy Committee's efforts to support libraries and continue to fight for securing legislative support for school library requirements. AISLE has worked hard during the 2024-25 school year with ILA on a bill requiring a licensed school librarian in every school. Further advocacy will be needed.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

There were no updates for discussion.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on January 8, 2026.

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. The topic will be Special Libraries.

10. Adjournment

Carroll adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m.