

Draft Minutes

RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting

January 8, 2026 | 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 4:03 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, Carolyn Sennett
Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen, Emily Porter
Shorewood-Troy Public Library District: Karen Voitik
Absent: Yolande Wilburn
3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
Guests in attendance at RAILS Burr Ridge: Joe Filapek, Alice Grabowski (designated notetaker), Monica Harris
Guests via Zoom: Dan Bostrom, Stacy Palmisano
4. Public Comments
There were no public comments.
5. Adoption of the Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
 - 5.2. Approval of the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Minutes of November 13, 2025
Holohan moved for the approval of the consent agenda, Sennett seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
6. New Business
 - 6.1. Special Libraries
Dan Bostrom, Director of Marketing and Communications at Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) presented on the definition and state of special libraries, noting 132 have RAILS memberships. The overview of special libraries included a highlight of their unique characteristics and challenges along with the value RAILS membership provides for them. Trends show RAILS loses 7-10 special libraries per year mainly due to lack of staffing and closure. The shift to online platforms

causes difficulties for special libraries. The recent merger of Special Libraries Association (SLA) to Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) began in Spring of 2025 with the official merger estimated for completion in Spring of 2026. ASIS&T was selected for the merger due to the heavy focus on research services. The Information Science Summit and Special Libraries Conference is scheduled for June 2026 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Work with Illinois Library Association (ILA) is occurring to ensure special libraries who feel like ASIS&T is not a fit can lean on ILA instead. Advocacy must occur at the local level due to the vast differences among them.

7. Reports

7.1. Institute of Museum and Library Services Update

Harris reported on the overview of The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) current funding for libraries which is at a temporary 2025 level. Nine of the twelve appropriation bills for fiscal year 2026 still need to be passed by February 1, 2026, to prevent a second shutdown of services. Recent legal activity was highlighted resulting in the restoration of IMLS federal grants. Congress and the State Budget Appropriation Committees both recommend full funding of the IMLS.

7.2. Illinois Legislative and Advocacy Update

Harris stated American Library Association (ALA) has decided to renew National Library Legislative Day. Nissen, Porter, and Harris will be representing Illinois in Washington, DC in February. Public Policy Committee (PPC) reaffirmed their four legislative priorities: open educational resources appropriation, public library trustee training legislation, e-book legislation (efforts include RAILS staff members, the Secretary of State's office, and Kyle Courtney founder of E-books for All), and the 20% increase proposal for grant programs funding library systems, public libraries, and schools through per capita School District Grant and Library Systems Act.

House Bill 4261 has been filed by the clerk Representative Martha Tudor. This bill proposes to amend the Illinois Library System Act and increase the amounts to be provided by the State Librarian for the annual library system grants, for annual grants to qualified public libraries in the state, and for annual school library grants.

7.3. AISLE Advocacy Committee Report

Caldicott shared that the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) is continuing advocating with ILA, RAILS, and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to push for licensed school librarians in every school building. Continuing advocacy to specific school districts who have staffing issues or potential funding cuts are occurring.

8. Unfinished Business

8.1. Library Issues Updates

The RAILS Board approved the statement “Free Speech Needs Free Libraries: A Joint Statement of CARLI, Orbis Cascade Alliance, and the Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation,” from November’s Advocacy Committee meeting on November 21, 2025. This statement has been shared with the membership.

9. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building for the Next RAILS Board Advocacy Committee Meeting on March 12, 2026

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. The topic will be RAILS Data Resources for Advocacy.

A report from the ALA National Library Legislative Day will be added to the March agenda.

10. Adjournment

Carroll adjourned the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

DRAFT