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**REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING**

Friday, March 27, 2026 | 1:00 PM  
RAILS Burr Ridge, 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

**DRAFT MINUTES**

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Gwen Gregory, President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, March 27, 2026, 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, Gwen Gregory, Jennifer Hovanec, Amanda Kowalcze, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski.

RAILS East Peoria: Ron Holohan, Roberta Parks

Rockford University: Megan Gove, Emily Porter

Absent: Monica Caldicott

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements

Guests at Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Anna Behm, Dan Bostrom, Leila Heath, Galin Iliev, Laura Nemeth, Kate Niehoff, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker), Anne Slaughter

Guests at Rockford University: Stephanie Nissen

Guests on Zoom: Sam Daly, Mark Hatch, Ryan Hebel, Suzanna Jones, Sharon Swanson

Gregory announced a change to the agenda. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, guest speaker Beth Duttlinger, who was scheduled to speak about rural libraries under agenda item nine, Board Development, will be unable to join us. Item nine will be removed from the agenda.

4. Public comments

There were no public comments.

5. Consent agenda – Gwen Gregory

5.1. Adoption of the Agenda

5.2. RAILS Board Minutes of February 27, 2026, Regular Meeting

5.3. Approval of Disbursements: February - Sharon Swanson

Hovanec motioned to approve the consent agenda with the removal of agenda item nine, Board Development. Parks seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jean Carroll, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Ron Holohan, Jennifer Hovanec,

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Amanda Kowalcze, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Alex Vancina, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

6. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported that general fund revenues for February 2026 were above budget primarily due to the earlier-than-anticipated receipt of the federal portion of the System Area and Per Capita (SAPC) grant funding. The bulk of the federal portion of the APC grant fund award was received on February 6, and the remaining payment was received on March 16. This portion of the grant was not anticipated to be received until May. The general fund expenditures through February were above budget. Fuel prices have risen dramatically and are either at or slightly above the \$3.14-per-gallon budgeted for the fiscal year. As of February 28, RAILS has received the full award amounts for both the L2 development grant and the world language cataloging services grant, as well as reimbursements and advance funding for the Cook County Digital Navigator Network (CCDNN) grant for staff time spent on this work through December 2025.

7. Reports

7.1. Report from the RAILS President

Gregory did not give a report.

7.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports

7.2.1. Advocacy Committee

7.2.2. Consortia Committee

7.2.3. Executive Committee

7.2.4. Policy Committee

7.2.5. Resource Sharing Committee

7.2.6. Universal Service Committee

Parks asked for clarification on the detailed information shared in the Advocacy Committee report. Harris acknowledged the advanced cataloging language and shared that this topic will be addressed in agenda item 8.2.

7.3. RAILS Reports

7.3.1. RAILS Monthly Report

Harris shared that on March 24, she served as a witness at the hearing on House Bill 5236 (HB5236) during the Consumer Protection Committee meeting in Springfield. Filed by Rep. Tracy Katz Muhl, HB5236 would amend the Digital Library Protection Act to include more reasonable terms for libraries as it relates to eBook licenses. The hearing vote was 6-3, and it now advances to the House for a vote and then to the Illinois Senate. Harris also mentioned House Bill 4261 (HB4261), which, if passed, would increase annual grants for public libraries in the state,

school library grants, and the library system grants by 20%, and House Bill 3411 (HB3411) which, if passed, would appropriate \$3,000,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Secretary of State for a recurring, permanent grant program for Illinois academic libraries. The grant would be applied to Open Educational Resources. Additionally, House Bill 4888 (HB4888) proposes modernizing the Local Records Retention Act. Parks shared that she recently met with Senator Koehler, who serves the 46<sup>th</sup> District, and eBook licensing was one of the topics they discussed. Harris announced that CARLI, IHLS, and RAILS recently changed the Illinois Library Delivery Service (ILDS) turnaround time, moving from 24 hours to 48 hours between delivery hubs to support long-term sustainability, operational efficiency, and safety across the statewide delivery network. The RAILS Board nominations are now open with six open seats, including a 2-year at-large seat. Harris encouraged the board members to reach out to their networks for nominations. The topics of web accessibility, a visit to the Chicago Public Library to view their materials automation handler, and the announcement that Joe Filapek was elected to the LIMIRIC board were also shared.

#### 7.3.2. RAILS Service of the Month: eRead Illinois

Behm gave an overview of RAILS' e-content platforms, eRead Illinois and Inkie.org. eRead Illinois is a shared popular e-content collection that serves all types of libraries, with member fees supporting the collection. eRead Illinois recently successfully migrated the 80,000-collection to The Palace Project platform. The Palace Project, managed by Lyris, offers a unique feature as an aggregator of other e-content collections. It also prioritizes available content and supports more favorable license types. Next, Behm discussed Inkie.org, a suite of self-publishing tools and a library of e-content by and about Illinoisans. Inkie.org is freely available to everyone in Illinois. In 2025, 169 self-published e-books were added to Inkie.org. Additionally, the Inkie.org library of e-books was aggregated in the The Palace Project app. Both Behm and Heath are active members of the ILA working group on e-content that supports HB5236. Behm shared that the *E-Resources Access Pulse* page on the RAILS website focuses on e-content issues and access to e-content, includes advocacy tools, and provides useful articles and electronic resources.

#### 7.4. Illinois State Library Report

Jones, from the Illinois State Library (ILS), reported that the System Area and Per Capita Grant application was sent to the systems and is due on May 31. This is a statutory grant funded from the general revenue fund, with a portion from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal funds. The LSTA allotment is annually appropriated by Congress. Jones reported that ILS staff have been visiting public libraries with higher grant funding to see how they are using their awards. Staff have been enjoying the

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visits. The topic of grant-writing assistance was discussed, with acknowledgment that smaller libraries have limited staff and grant-writing expertise.

8. New business

8.1. Succession Plan Update

Harris stated that on March 5, the RAILS Executive Committee met to review the annual succession plan. The plan was adopted last year, and after discussion, the Executive Committee recommends that the full Board review the plan triennially, with the Executive Director reviewing its details annually. Additional changes were made to the communications section of the plan, and the signature lines were replaced with a separate “receipt of acknowledgment” page. Holohan requested that clarifying language be added to the guidelines on whether a temporary leave of the Executive Director should be paid or unpaid. Harris responded that this subject falls under other types of leave, as outlined in the RAILS Employee Handbook, and that she will research the appropriate way to add it to the succession plan.

Vancina motioned to approve the Succession Plan revisions that were presented by the Executive Committee. Yanikoski seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

8.2. Cataloging Standards

Filapek reported that at the March 12 RAILS Advocacy Committee, three members of the American Library Association (ALA) Subject Access Committee’s (SAC) Working Group on \$v Retention joined the meeting. Though this is a technical cataloging issue, it is an important topic that affects how library materials are organized and discovered by users. They shared that the Library of Congress proposed changes to cataloging practices, specifically the removal of certain form subdivisions from subject headings, which is relevant in broad category searches. The SAC Working Group is advocating for the retention of these subdivisions, emphasizing their value in supporting clear and consistent access to library collections. Filapek added that while some libraries may have the capacity to manually reintroduce this cataloging information to records, smaller libraries throughout RAILS may lack the staffing, time, or cataloging expertise to do so. This creates a potential equity issue, where larger or better-resourced libraries are better positioned to preserve high-quality access to their collections, while others may fall behind. The Advocacy Committee shares these concerns and recommends that the RAILS Board of Directors endorse the Working Group’s position.

Porter motioned to endorse the ALA SAC Working Group’s position on retaining certain cataloging subdivisions, specifically from subject headings, as presented by the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee. Voitik seconded, and the motion was unanimously

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approved.

### 8.3. Strategic Plan Update

Harris shared that the RAILS Strategic Plan Steering Committee has been formed and held its first committee meeting on March 23. Harris thanked board members Gregory and Yanikoski for their participation on the committee. At their first meeting, they gave brief introductions, reviewed responsibilities of serving on the Steering Committee, and provided feedback on the member and staff surveys. The survey, which is expected to be ready in early April, will be open to the RAILS membership for both staff and trustees to complete. RAILS Board members were encouraged to complete the survey and to share it with their network. Filapek stated that a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with consultant Cindy Fesemyer are scheduled to begin in April. Feedback from the survey, focus groups, and interviews will be incorporated into a Member Assessment Report.

## 9. Board Development

### 9.1. Overview of Rural Libraries

This presentation was removed from the agenda after the speaker unexpectedly canceled.

## 10. RAILS Board Member Reports

Porter announced that on April 16, the Rockford Public Library's Nordlof Center will host a free film screening of *"The Librarians"*. The documentary captures the frontline struggle for the freedom to read. Porter thanked RAILS for being one of the event sponsors and Harris for her participation in the special Q&A discussion panel.

Hovanec also shared that LaGrange Public Library will host A screening of *"The Librarians"* documentary on April 24 as part of the PBS Independent Lens documentary series *IndieLens* Pop-Up. A panel discussion with local advocates and experts will follow the Friday screening.

Vancina, a member of the ILA Conference Committee, announced that presenter applications opened on April 3 for the ILA Annual Conference, which will be held in Peoria in October.

Parks shared that she will be a judge for the Peoria regional spelling bee, which will be held at the Peoria Public Library on March 28.

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11. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building

The next RAILS board meeting will be on Friday, April 24, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at the Founders Memorial Library at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, IL. There will be a library tour starting at 10:30 am and a networking lunch at noon. The agenda for the April meeting will include a draft of the System Area and Per Capita Grant operational plan, the status of the annual library certification, an update on the strategic plan, the quarterly consortial reports, the service of the month will be on RAILS member engagement, and the board development topic will be Sustainability in Libraries.

12. Adjourn

Gregory adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm.