Approved 8/28/2026

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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, July 24, 2026|1:00 PM
RAILS Burr Ridge
125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order
   Gwen Gregory, RAILS President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, July 24, 2026, at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.

2. Roll Call of Members
   Palmisano called the roll of the Board members.
   RAILS Burr Ridge: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Victoria Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Victor Hinojosa, Rebecca Hunt, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski.
   RAILS East Peoria: Ron Holohan

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
   Guests at Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Dan Bostrom, Ola Gronski, Liana Hirner, Galin Iliev, Laura Nemeth, Sharon Swanson, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker), Brian Smith, Wes Smith
   Guests on Zoom: Kate Niehoff, Anne Slaughter, Liz Toft (arrived at 1:49 pm)

4. Public Comments
   There were no public comments.

5. Oath of office and election of officers
   5.1. Newly Elected Board Members Oath of Office
   Catherine Yanikoski, Vice President, announced the six newly elected RAILS board members. Jennie Cottrill, in the at-large seat from Midlothian Public Library, Victoria Ferguson in the public library seat from the Prairie Creek Library, Gwen Gregory in the academic library seat from Northern Illinois University, Victor Hinojosa in the public library seat from Waukegan Public Library, Rebecca Hunt in the public library from DeKalb Public Library, and Joanna Marek in the school library seat from La Grange South School District #105. Next, Yankoski administered the oath of office, and all six were sworn in as members of the RAILS Board of Directors.

5.2. Election of Officers

Gregory presented the slate of officers as recommended by the RAILS Nominating Committee. After opening the nominations, the following slate will move forward to a vote: Catherine Yanikoski, President; Amanda Kowalcze, Vice President; Emily Porter, Secretary; and Megan Gove, Treasurer.

Parks motioned to approve the slate of officers as presented. Voitik seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

At this point in the meeting, the newly elected President, Catherine Yanikoski, took over as Chairperson.

6. Consent Agenda
   - 6.1. Adoption of the Agenda
   - 6.2. ~~RAILS Board Minutes of June 18, 2026 Regular Meeting~~ (Removed for separate discussion)
   - 6.3. RAILS Board Special Meeting Minutes of June 30, 2026
   - 6.4. Approval of Disbursements: June 2026
   - 6.5. RAILS Board meeting schedule for FY 2027

Agenda item 6.2 was removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. Moved to agenda item 7.1

Voitik moved to approve the consent agenda with the removal of item 6.2. Kowalcze seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Victoria Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Ron Holohan, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Abstained: Victor Hinojosa, Rebecca Hunt. Nays: none.

7. Amended Minutes of May 22, 2026

Harris reviewed the corrections to the RAILS Board meeting minutes of May 22, 2026. Date changes were made, along with a spelling correction to a participant's last name.

Parks moved to approve the RAILS Board meeting minutes of May 22, 2026, as amended. Voitik seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Victoria Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Victor Hinojosa, Ron Holohan, Rebecca Hunt, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

7.1. Consent Agenda Relocated Agenda Item 6.2 (pulled from Consent Agenda 6.2)

Harris presented the correction to the RAILS Board Minutes of June 18, 2026. The change was within agenda item 7.3.1, regarding the reinstatement of Western Illinois University library staff. The correction adds that a faculty union arbitrator ruled that administration violated a collective bargaining agreement when terminating the employment of staff, including nine faculty librarians.

Gove moved to approve the RAILS Board meeting minutes of June 18, 2026, as amended. Gregory seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Victoria Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Ron Holohan, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Abstained: Victor Hinojosa, Rebecca Hunt. Nays: none.

8. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported that through June, General fund revenues and expenditures were above budget. The June 30, 2026, unassigned General fund cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 21.2 months of budgeted FY2027 operations. Interest income was significantly higher due to sustained higher-than-anticipated interest rates throughout most of fiscal year 2026. Swanson provided additional details on the FY2026 General Fund revenues and expenditures. Activity related to L2 (Library Directory & Learning Calendar) development, world language cataloging services, and Cook County Digital Navigator Network (CCDNN) grants has been recorded in the Special Revenue fund.

9. Reports

9.1. Report from the RAILS President

Yanikoski, as the newly appointed Board President, thanked Gregory for her time as Board President over the last fiscal year. She stated that it is a privilege to be appointed the Board President.

9.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports - Committee Chairs

9.2.1. Advocacy Committee - Open
9.2.2. Consortia Committee - Open
9.2.3. Executive Committee - TBD
9.2.4. Policy Committee – TBD
9.2.5. Resource Sharing Committee - Open
9.2.6. Universal Service Committee – Open

A date correction for the next Advocacy Committee meeting was mentioned. August 20, 2026, is a Thursday, rather than Monday as stated in the report.

9.3. RAILS Monthly Report

Gronski shared that an episode of the school library podcast, *Can't Shelve This*, recently went viral, reaching 1.2 million views and 112,000 likes. The podcast is created jointly by staff from both RAILS and Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS). A video clip from the podcast was played. The guests interviewed on that podcast episode were library paraprofessionals. Filapek informed the board of an unexpected repair to the Burr Ridge HVAC system this week. The unit chillers will be replaced this year as part of the capital assessment. In the report, Harris highlighted the June 25 vote by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to consider eliminating the E-Rate program. The program is an essential source of broadband funding for libraries and schools. According to the Illinois State Library, Illinois public libraries receive over $3.7 million

each year through this program. The American Library Association (ALA) continues to watch the Senate book-banning bill S4925. The Illinois Library Association's (ILA) Public Policy Committee (PPC) is currently accepting legislative proposals to be considered for the 2027 legislative session. RAILS Board Member Emily Porter has recently joined the ILA Public Policy Committee. Next week, RAILS will host an event to celebrate its fifteenth anniversary.

9.4. Illinois State Library Report - ISL staff

Toft joined the meeting to give the Illinois State Library report. Springfield wrapped up the America 250 activities, which included the Illinois State Library, museums, and the Illinois Archives. The Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) will meet on September 24. The Illinois Literacy Foundation and the Chicago Cubs partnered to launch *Illinois Reads Together*, a statewide summer reading challenge that gives students who complete their local library's summer reading program the chance to throw out the ceremonial first pitch at Wrigley Field. Lastly, Toft shared that the system's annual report was emailed.

10. New business

10.1. New Member

Bostrom gave an overview of the Elgin Mental Health Center, which is a state hospital within the Illinois Department of Human Services. There are approximately 400 patients, and the library also serves about 150 center staff. They are all adult patients; some patients may have developmental or other disabilities. The librarian is interested in resources for patients, deals and discounts, and continuing education and training.

Parks moved to accept the Elgin Mental Health Center for full membership in RAILS, with final approval requested from the Illinois State Library. Hinojosa seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

10.2. Board Committee Assignments

Harris shared that each RAILS Board member is required to serve on at least one Board Committee. Each Board Committee has different requirements and meets on different schedules. The committees are made up of a mix of board members and library members. Committee meetings are held with the same Open Meetings Act (OMA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) standards as the board meetings.

10.3. Election of At-large Member to Executive Committee

The RAILS bylaws state that "The President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, together with one additional Director elected by the Board of Directors, shall constitute the Executive Committee." Board President Yanikoski nominated Jennifer Cutshall to the at-large seat of the RAILS Board Executive Committee. There were no objections.

Voitik motioned to elect Jennifer Cutshall to the at-large seat of the RAILS Board

Executive Committee. Cottrill seconded, and the vote was unanimously approved.

10.4. Offsite Board Meeting on September 25, 2026

Harris shared that the Board holds two off-site meetings each year to meet with members, visit other RAILS service centers, and tour member libraries. The September 25 board meeting was discussed and will be held at the RAILS Coal Valley service center. The visit will include a morning tour of the Moline Public Library's new outdoor gardens. There was interest in touring the different service center operations, and a list of potential libraries to visit was discussed.

10.5. Strategic Plan Update

The RAILS Strategic Plan refresh is currently underway, Filapek reported. The four goals and the mission statement will remain the same, with the goal objectives and the vision statement updated. In June, the Board participated in a workshop during which they reviewed feedback from surveys, an assessment report, interviews, and focus groups. Also discussed were possible objectives, potential activities, and how to effectively measure the objectives. After the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meets in August, the board, membership, and staff will be asked to provide feedback on the initial plan. The goal is to finalize the refresh by November.

10.6. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy and Grievance Procedure

Harris reported that on June 24, the RAILS Board Policy Committee voted to recommend the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy and Grievance Procedure for board approval. The policy was prepared by RAILS' attorney at Ancel Glink and then reviewed by the Policy Committee. The document is intended to provide clear ADA guidelines and procedures. Filapek was added as the ADA Coordinator. Members can request ADA accommodation for all RAILS continuing education programs.

Cutshall moved to approve the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy and Grievance Procedure. Gove seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

11. Board Development

11.1. RAILS Financial report and budget

Swanson gave an overview of RAILS' finances, including financial reports, budgets, fraud awareness, and the board members' role in financial oversight. RAILS is a modified accrual accounting organization with three fund types: general, capital projects, and special review funds. Swanson explained which expenditures fall under each fund, summarized the information in the monthly financial reports, and reviewed the RAILS investments. The cash position report aims to achieve 18 months of cash coverage for the general fund. The System Area Per Capita Grant is received in two payments: November and February. Swanson gave the board tips on reading the Revenue and Expenditures reports. Part of the presentation included a review of the budget and the budget process, noting the percentage of expenditure. Swanson noted that as a service

organization, personnel costs represent RAILS' largest operational expense. Lastly, a detailed list of the board's fiscal oversight responsibilities was discussed.

12. RAILS Board Member Reports
    Gregory shared usage statistics from Northern Illinois University on the Find More Illinois platform. Nearly 900 items were shared in just under one year, spanning a wide variety.

    Parks shared that Peoria Public Library completed its summer reading program, with a 62% increase in participation, with over 4,500 people. One branch, along with local organizations, gave away 68 bicycles, bike helmets, and motorized scooters as part of the summer-reading prizes. A summer reading booklet was new this year and distributed at the library, bookstores, and schools. Additionally, the library held staff training on the summer reading program and events to build participation.

13. Meeting recap and agenda building: RAILS board meeting Friday, August 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.
    At the Friday, August 28 board meeting, the agenda will include a review of the RAILS investment portfolio, a review of the Fiscal Accountability Policy, a report on OMA and FOIA requests, and the board development topic will be RAILS Catalyst.

14. Adjourn
    The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.