Approved 10/23/2026

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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD

Friday, September 25, 2026 | 1:00 PM
RAILS Coal Valley
RAILS Coal Valley, 220 W. 23rd Avenue, Coal Valley, IL 61240

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order
   Catherine Yanikoski, RAILS President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, September 25, 2026, at the RAILS Coal Valley Service Center.

2. Roll Call of RAILS Board of Directors
   Palmisano called the roll of the RAILS Board of Directors.
   RAILS Coal Valley: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski.
   RAILS Burr Ridge: Joanna Marek
   Prairie Creek Public Library District: Tori Ferguson
   Absent: Victor Hinojosa, Ron Holohan, Rebecca Hunt, Emily Porter

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
   Guests at Coal Valley: Dan Bostrom, Angela Campbell, Alice Grabowski, Mark Hatch, Monica Harris, Kate Niehoff, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker), Wesley Smith, Jordan Wendt
   Guests at Burr Ridge: Matt Geerdes, Laura Nemeth, Sharon Swanson, Anne Slaughter
   Guests on Zoom: Laurie Blandino (1:45 pm), Sam Daly, Karen Egan, Ryan Hebel

4. Public Comments
   There were no public comments.

5. Consent Agenda
   5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
   5.2. RAILS Board Meeting Minutes of August 28, 2026
   5.3. Approval of Disbursements: August, 2026 - Sharon Swanson
   Gove moved to approve the consent agenda. Voitik seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

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6. Annual Audit Report FY2026
   Geerdes, Principal at SIKICH, joined the meeting to give the RAILS Annual Audit Report. The process was efficiently executed and included risk assessments, year-end procedures, and a single audit, resulting in a clean, unmodified opinion. The single audit is in draft form until the single audit outline is released.
   Parks moved to accept the FY2026 RAILS Annual Audit. Cottrill seconded, and a roll call was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

7. RAILS Financial Report
   Swanson reported that through August, general fund revenues and expenditures were below budget. The August 31, 2026, unassigned general fund ($22.8 million) cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 19.1 months of budgeted FY2027 operations. Fuel prices were below the budgeted $4.50 per gallon, and RAILS received a partial insurance settlement for a delivery vehicle totaled in early June. Buildings and grounds expenditures were above budget primarily due to the required timing of the lease payments for RAILS' Bolingbrook, Rockford, and East Peoria facilities. In August, RAILS purchased and received one of the nine Ford Transit replacement vehicles budgeted for FY2027.

8. Reports
   8.1. Report from the RAILS President
   Yanikoski thanked RAILS staff for planning the Moline Public Library tour and preparing for the meeting at Coal Valley.

   8.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports
   No additional comments

   8.3. RAILS Reports
   8.3.1. RAILS Monthly Report
   Harris thanked the Moline Public Library for graciously hosting tours of its library and gardens for the board, staff, and guests. On September 24, Harris attended the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) meeting, where she presented on Find More Illinois. Highlights from the monthly report include the American Library Association's (ALA) call for libraries to submit formal comments on the possible elimination of the E-Rate program by Tuesday, October 13. The Illinois Library Association (ILA) Public Policy Committee submitted four legislative priorities to the ILA Executive Board to vote on. This month, Harris attended the ribbon-cutting at Wheaton Public Library's West Plaza, visited Board Directors Tori Ferguson's and Joanna Marek's libraries, and toured all six libraries in Matteson/Richton Park

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School District #159. Find More Illinois announced the program and logo rebrand, and the *Can't Shelve This* podcast hit 20K downloads.

8.3.2. RAILS Service of the Month: Delivery

Hatch gave an overview of the RAILS delivery department. The RAILS delivery model is a hybrid system of in-house and outsourced deliveries with a statewide focus. There are four in-house delivery hubs: Bolingbrook, Coal Valley, East Peoria, and Rockford. Continental Transport Solutions is an outsourced vendor that covers two RAILS delivery routes. GeoMARC logistics specialists regularly consult RAILS to ensure efficient delivery routes. Hatch highlighted the delivery options available to libraries, the labeling system, and how delivery data is collected digitally through iPads. In FY2026, RAILS delivered 8.3M items, made 107K stops, and covered 27K square miles. Harris shared that Hatch is an industry leader.

8.4. Illinois State Library Report

Karen Egan joined the meeting to give the Illinois State Library (ISL) report. The state has received 393 applications for the FY2027 School District Library Grants so far. The deadline is October 15. The Project Next Generation Grants will be finalized soon. The Security Grant program experienced significant demand, receiving an overwhelming request of $7.8 million, substantially exceeding available funding. A total of 60 grants were awarded. The top request was for new or upgraded security cameras, followed by key fobs for interior and exterior doors, panic button installation, and cybersecurity. September is National Literacy Month. Egan shared that the Illinois Secretary of State's office partnered with the Literacy Foundation and the Chicago Cubs and launched the "Illinois Reads Together" summer reading challenge. ISL recently received substantial book donations and distributed them to YMCA locations statewide.

9. New business

9.1. Annual Report

Harris highlighted several RAILS accomplishments from the previous fiscal year, listed in the narrative report. The narrative report is a component of the Annual Report. Highlights included migrating eRead Illinois to the Palace Project, the Cook County Digital Navigator partnership, the Resource Sharing Alliance (RSA) independence in January 2026, the inaugural RAILS Catalyst leadership program, RAILS hosting the Libraries Count preconference, receiving the Palmer Marketing Award, and completing the digital version of the RAILS resource-sharing map.

Voitik moved to approve the narrative report for submission to the Illinois State Library as part of the FY2026 Annual report. Gregory seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine

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Yanikoski. Nays: none.

9.2. Amendments to Intergovernmental Agreement and Bylaws for LIMRiCC Membership
Harris reported that the Library Insurance Management and Risk Control Combination (LIMRiCC) voted to allow Wellness Insurance Network (WIN) libraries to join its health insurance pool effective January 1, 2027. To finalize this integration, revisions to LIMRiCC's Bylaws and Intergovernmental Agreement require approval from member boards, prompting three resolutions presented for RAILS Board action.

#1 Gove moved to approve RAILS Resolution 26-01 adopting the "AMENDING THE AMENDED BY-LAWS OF THE LIBRARY INSURANCE MANAGEMENT AND RISK CONTROL COMBINATION (LIMRICC) ORGANIZATION TO ALLOW FOR SUBSTANTIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS OF THE ORGANIZATION". Parks seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

#2 Cottrill moved to approve the RAILS Resolution 26-02 adopting the "AMENDING THE AMENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR RISK MANAGEMENT AND AUTHORIZING MEMBERSHIP IN THE LIBRARY INSURANCE MANAGEMENT AND RISK CONTROL COMBINATION (LIMRICC) TO ALLOW SUBSTANTIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT". Sennett seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

#3 Parks moved to approve the RAILS Resolution 26-03 adopting the "RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE EXECUTION OF AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBRARY INSURANCE MANAGEMENT AND RISK CONTROL COMBINATION (LIMRICC)". Kowalcze seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Jennifer Cutshall, Tori Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Rob Parks, Porter, Carolyn Sennett, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none.

10. Unfinished Business

10.1. Strategic Plan Update

Harris discussed the strategic plan update and the first-draft plan. Board of Directors members Yanikoski and Gregory both serve on the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. During October, the draft objectives will be shared with RAILS membership and staff to provide additional opportunities for engagement and to gather further insight. Harris shared that the board will see an updated draft at the November meeting.

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11. Board Development
    11.1. Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI)

    Laurie Blandino, CARLI Director, joined the meeting to provide an overview of the services provided to academic libraries in Illinois. CARLI has 122 governing members and serves 90% of Illinois' higher education institutions. CARLI membership includes the I-Share integrated library system, e-resource brokering, and database subscriptions. The Illinois Library Delivery Service (ILDS) offers delivery among CARLI libraries and the state regional library systems. Funding Open Education Resources (OER) is a priority of the CARLI Governance Board. The Last Copy Program seeks to preserve the last copy of monographs within the Illinois academic and research library community. Blandino collaborates regularly with RAILS, and CARLI staff serves on the RAILS Board Consortia Committee.

12. RAILS Board Member Reports

    Voitik shared that a book fair photo she took was an ILA picture of the month.

    Marek shared that the school librarian at Central Stickney School District #110 in Chicago had second and third grade students apply to be Librarian of the Day.

    Gregory shared that this fall, the Northern Illinois University Art Museum is presenting *The Olmec Heads Experience*. The exhibition features large, artist-designed sculptures inspired by the ancient Olmec civilization.

13. Meeting Recap and Agenda Building: RAILS Board Meeting Friday, October 23

    The October 23, 2026, meeting will start at 1:00 pm at the RAILS Burr Ridge location. The October agenda will include a report on Deals & Discounts, a review of updated compliance laws, and a presentation on OMA best practices.

14. Adjourn

    The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 pm.