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REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM BOARD MEETING

Friday, October 23, 2026|1:00 PM
RAILS Burr Ridge
RAILS Burr Ridge, 125 Tower Drive, Burr Ridge, IL 60527

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Welcome and Call to Order
   Catherine Yanikoski, RAILS President, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm on Friday, October 23, 2026, at the RAILS Burr Ridge Service Center.

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

3. Recognition of Guests and Announcements
   Guests at Burr Ridge: Monica Harris, Joe Filapek, Kurt Asprooth, Dan Bostrom, Leila Heath, Galin Iliev, Kate Niehoff, Stacy Palmisano (designated note taker), Anne Slaughter, Kortni Springer, Sharon Swanson, Maggie Thomann
   Guests on Zoom: Sam Daly, Mark Hatch, Ryan Hebel, Suzanna Jones, Jessica Silva

4. Public Comments
   There were no public comments.

5. Consent Agenda
   5.1. Adoption of the Agenda
   5.2. RAILS Board Meeting Minutes of September 25, 2026
   5.3. Approval of Disbursements: September 2026
   Cottrill moved to approve the consent agenda. Parks seconded, and a roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Jennie Cottrill, Victoria Ferguson, Megan Gove, Gwen Gregory, Ron Holohan, Rebecca Hunt, Amanda Kowalcze, Joanna Marek, Roberta Parks, Emily Porter, Karen Voitik, Catherine Yanikoski. Nays: none. Abstain: Victor Hinojosa

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6. RAILS Financial Report

Swanson reported that through September, the General fund revenues were $9,708,240 above budget, and expenditures were $501,900 below budget. The September 30, 2026, unassigned General fund cash and investment balances would fund an estimated 27.2 months of budgeted FY2027 operations. General fund revenues through September exceeded budget primarily because the state paid the FY2027 APC grant one week earlier than in the prior fiscal year. In addition, interest rates have remained higher than anticipated, and RAILS received several refunds and vehicle insurance settlements from the prior fiscal year. In September, RAILS replaced part of the gutter system and added gutter covers at our Coal Valley facility.

7. Reports - Catherine Yanikoski

7.1. Report from the RAILS President

No report.

7.2. RAILS Board Committee Reports

No additional questions or comments.

7.3. RAILS Reports

7.3.1. RAILS Monthly Report

Harris announced Leila Heath's retirement as Director of Library Resources and Programs, effective February 2027. Heath has been with RAILS since 2019, and RAILS' library services have grown significantly under her leadership. Harris shared that the American Library Association has announced the 2027 National Legislative Days as February 24-25. Highlighted from the report was that registration is now open for the full-day online Virtual Vendor Fair being held on January 2, the launch of the new School Library Advocacy Toolkit, the 2026-2027 School Library Advocacy Through Education (SLATE) census is open through February 28, 2027, and the School Library Symposium drew over 300 school library attendees. Harris gave an update on the Illinois E-Book bill, including the potential for a Senate vote in early 2027.

7.3.2. RAILS Service of the Month: RAILS Deals & Discounts

Leila Heath, Kortni Springer, and Maggie Thomann presented the Deals & Discounts department as RAILS Service of the Month. RAILS offers over 60 products and $3.6 million in savings for RAILS member libraries. The team partners with vendors by building relationships, finding quality deals and deep discounts, and

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negotiating favorable terms. RAILS advocates accessibility compliance with vendor partners and collects documentation, such as Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates (VPAT), in a shared repository. RAILS provides both centralized billing and pass-through deals. There is also an email address exclusively for deals and discounts: deals@railslibraries.org.

7.4. Illinois State Library Report

Suzanna Jones attended the meeting to give the Illinois State Library report. The School District Library Grant has closed, with 661 applications received. The award is based on Fall student enrollment. The Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Grants are opening soon. Public libraries will be sent updated forms to use. The ILLINET Interlibrary Loan and Statistical Survey is open, and the deadline is December 31, 2026. The Illinois State Library Advisory Committee will next meet on December 3.

8. New Business

8.1. Compliance with Laws Update

Annually, RAILS is required to review compliance with laws as part of the Annual Report. Ancel Glink, RAILS legal partners, has provided an updated list of laws. Harris gave an overview of the three new laws relevant to RAILS in FY2027.

8.2. Board Statement in Support of School Libraries

The RAILS Board Advocacy Committee has updated the RAILS statement supporting school libraries and school librarians. The original joint statement was created and approved by the Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) in 2023.

Porter moved to adopt the updated RAILS Statement of Support for School Libraries and School Librarians. Gove seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

8.3. New Member Approval

Silva presented the J.T. & E.J. Crumbaugh Memorial Library, a special library open to the public and endowed by the Crumbaugh family. Next year the library will celebrate its 100-year anniversary. The library offers story time, serves as the senior center, hosts programs, and provides genealogy resources.

Voitik moved to accept the J.T. & E.J. Crumbaugh Memorial Library to full membership in RAILS, with final approval requested from the Illinois State Library. Parks seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

9. Unfinished Business

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9.1. Strategic Plan Update

Filapek reported on the strategic plan refresh process, noting that the draft plan is currently available for staff and the RAILS membership for feedback. The goal of the feedback is to determine whether the new objectives will meet members' needs. The final draft plan will be presented at the November board meeting.

10. Board Development

10.1. Open Meetings Act Best Practices

Kurt Asprooth, Partner at Ancel Glink, joined the meeting to discuss the Open Meetings Act (OMA) best practices with the Board. Topics included meeting quorums, electronic participation, adopting an annual schedule for board and committee meetings, meeting agendas, and closed-session meetings. Asprooth discussed keeping meetings open and convenient to the public, and that an organization cannot turn people away from a meeting. Asprooth reviewed closed-session meetings and minutes and presented a list of responses to public comments from the Public Access Counselor (PAC).

11. RAILS Board Member Reports

Cottrill announced that the Midlothian Public Library will host a grand opening on November 7 for their new makerspace, Studio 147.

Marek shared that the elementary school librarian from Northfield Glenview School District #30 offers a quarterly Books & Baked Goods Friday Breakfast event for teachers to gather in the library. New books, seasonal books, books on the behavioral topic of the month, and books on the heritage topic of the month are displayed. Teachers socialize and select books for their classrooms.

12. Agenda Building: RAILS Board Meeting Friday, November 20, 2026

The November 20, 2026, meeting will start at 1:00 pm at the RAILS Burr Ridge location. The agenda will include a report on eRead Illinois and Inkie.org, the board development topic will focus on small and rural libraries, and the meeting will include a closed session to review closed-session minutes.

13. Adjourn

Yanikoski adjourned the meeting at 3:05 pm.