

**RAILS**  
**Reaching Across Illinois Library System**  
**RAILS/LLSAP Task Force Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**LaSalle Public Library – 1:30 p.m.**  
**January 11, 2012**

**1a. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Adamowski called the RAILS-LLSAP Task Force Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Present in LaSalle: Betsy Adamowski, Sue Herring, John Spears, Al Davidson, Michael Piper, Anne Craig, Pat Norris, Suzanne Schriar, Laura Frizol

By videoconference: Cyndy Colletti, Karen Egan, and Karen Stott Bersche at ISL; Phyllis Self at WIU; Mary Witt at Wheeling

**1b. Designation of Minute Recorder**

Carol Steffens, RAILS Executive Assistant, was designated minute recorder (at Burr Ridge).

**1c. Roll Call of LLSAP Task Force Members**

Present were: Kendal Orrison, Cindy Rauch

By videoconference: Aaron Skog at RAILS Burr Ridge; Yvonne Bergendorf and Jane Plass at RAILS Geneva; Randy Turner at RAILS East Peoria; Mary Soucie at RAILS Shorewood

**1d. Public Comments**

Chair Adamowski invited public comments from each of the sites and offered another time later in the meeting for the same. There were no public comments.

**1e. Open Meetings Act**

Chair Adamowski reminded everyone that the meeting would follow the rules of the Open Meetings Act.

**1f. Adoption of the Agenda**

DIRECTOR HERRING MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA. DIRECTOR SPEARS SECONDED.

The motion carried.

**2. Purpose of Task Force**

John Spears presented a proposal for the structure of the Task Force. He offered background information on how and why the Task Force was created as well as the history of LLSAPs going back to 1973 noting that funding from the Illinois State Library has always flowed through the systems to the LLSAPS in support of automation.

Spears suggested that the Task Force needs to consider three things: 1) What will best serve the library patron; 2) The importance of a partnership between RAILS and the LLSAPs; and, 3) Seek to provide opportunities for all libraries to participate in an automated program.

**3. Discussion on Fears and Concerns of Each LLSAP**

Chair Adamowski opened discussion with each LLSAP about their major fears and/or concerns.

- PrairieCat – PrairieCat has lost 19 libraries as of December 2011 and will lose six more by fiscal year end with 40% less resources than at the start of FY12. The effects of this change are the loss of these libraries for resource sharing and less income. They are less afraid of the system going away, although still hearing rumors and have some concerns regarding what will happen with delivery.

They hear contract concerns from members – “what are we paying RAILS for and how are they demonstrating it”? Need a more definitive answer to give them. Next year, they will be serving small and medium-sized libraries that may not be able to afford full membership. What will their role be in supporting small libraries?

- MAGIC – MAGIC would repeat the concerns of PrairieCat with only three school agencies and eight libraries. They have lost schools in the past, and may lose another one in the near future. Long term system funding with the Illinois State Library budget is better now than a year ago, but still very tight. A more immediate concern is the ability to retain experienced staff, particularly as decisions made could present long commutes. Telecommuting does provide some relief.

When larger libraries are able to go off on their own, there is less resource sharing. MAGIC does not just provide automation service, but also includes education, mentorship, etc.

- RSA – RSA automated at a good time in 2006 and they have been able to retain the same fee structure. This is the last year of that contract so not sure of what costs will be with vendors and with RAILS for FY13. They are comfortable with what was done in the past and are happy with the system relationship. They would like to see that relationship continue to benefit the partnership that serves the smaller libraries.
- SWAN – SWAN’s biggest concern is how RAILS will move forward in the future. The task force needs to work on a clear articulation of vision. Delivery and facility decisions could impact membership. Timelines are unclear as well as whether or not LLSAPs will be engaged in the process.

Also, mixed messages from the ISL and RAILS in terms of funds, system finances are okay now, but will that continue? What is the task force’s charge and what are the deliverables? Will the RAILS Board see a report from this group that provides a historical background and what our findings are?. The system should consider broadening its scope with resource sharing in mind.

SWAN does not believe it is an attractive choice for a school library. At one point there was one school that was a full SWAN member but pulled out. SWAN offers an annual subscription services called “Internet Access” which currently has 20-22 school districts signed up for flat fee (around \$600). School staff is able to request items through SWAN via its OPAC and receive them via RAILS delivery. Delivery decisions could affect that service. SWAN also has an Enhanced Access level of service which has seen a decrease in library membership over the years due to these libraries becoming full members of SWAN (only Lansing Public Library currently is an Enhanced Access member).

School libraries in MAGIC are particularly interested in resource sharing which is the main reason a school library will join an LLSAP. MAGIC does not charge other Illinois libraries to place holds through its web catalog. This was the result of a coordinated effort with DLS public libraries.

Anne Craig noted that the Illinois State Library conducted a statewide survey of LLSAPs ten years ago. What was foremost was that resource sharing is “delicate.” System law and state library grants to systems are built on the proposition that funding would flow if everyone was doing the same thing. The state is committed to resource sharing and it takes everyone to support this network.

Craig reminded the group that a lot of resources and support have been spent on developing best practices. How RAILS will retain catalogs is important – is there a shared commitment to continuing with four platforms, or are the LLSAPs willing to look toward a single platform? The ultimate goal would be to see every library automated.

#### 4. Discussion on Philosophy of each LLSAP in Regard to Relationship to RAILS

Chair Adamowski opened discussion with each LLSAP about their philosophy in regard to their relationship to RAILS.

- SWAN – SWAN wants to be part of RAILS and part of the future. Resource sharing is primary and we need to look at it differently as the climate changes. A question was raised regarding hanging on to a bad model in order to get funding.
- RSA – RSA needs to stay with RAILS for funding. Small libraries don't have the time or experience of larger libraries and more regulation is less attractive. Eventually, small libraries will drop out of membership if membership costs are too high.
- MAGIC – MAGIC is committed to staying with RAILS. Other options are not being explored at this time. They are looking to negotiate the same kind of contract for FY13 and are open to partnership opportunities.
- PrairieCat – At this time, PrairieCat is committed to staying with RAILS as it makes the best sense, at least for FY13. The partnership between PrairieCat and the system has worked well for a long time. They don't believe the model is broken, but could be tweaked.
- The ISL representatives said the State Library wants to be sure that lawmakers who make decisions about funding can look at the architecture of the library system and say that is how they support the local catalogs. Everything should be on the table.

The committee discussed what the “bigger picture” might look like. One suggestion was for the system to possibly have three platforms for three separate purposes; i.e., one for the large libraries, one for the small libraries, and one for the schools. This would entail a long-term migration and would require marketing to get new libraries to join. Delivery is based on volume. Staffing could be a problem.

Under the current approach, all staff assigned to LLSAPs are RAILS employees. Because LLSAPs are a service, a larger share of the cost for personnel could be paid by the system.

Systems have been having this conversation for the last ten years – encouraging service level agreements instead of employees. This is a partnership. Everyone would benefit if we shift focus away from specific staff members and on to bundling services.

Combining staff resources and reshaping the model to reflect current reality will require adjustments from everyone. All four directors believe that the service contract is the way to go. Staffing in place will suggest that the task force needs to look at what “under the auspices” of the regional library system means and how to meet those requirements for funding.

There is opportunity at this juncture to determine how each LLSAP best supports services to its geographical area. There is no attachment to buildings currently owned and operated by RAILS. The task force can be a direction setter. The Board has the ability to make changes now. Members expect more than for RAILS to maintain a reserve. RAILS is committed to investing in LLSAPs and has begun to demonstrate with a substantial financial increase.

**5. Future Steps**

The committee discussed the need for fundamental rules and a core set of philosophies and practices. RAILS membership criteria needs to be defined and standardized. The FY13 budget is in the beginning stages and work is ongoing with the LLSAP managers. A timetable will be presented to the Board and RAILS is open to additional participation by the LLSAPs in the process.

Betsy outlined the four key areas for the task force:

- 1. Enhance services to LLSAP members
- 2. Make LLSAP membership more affordable
- 3. Promote the advantages of LLSAP membership
- 4. Foster cost-effective resource sharing among Illinois libraries

**6. Public Comments**

Discussion about each LLSAP having its own website ensued and will be a topic for discussion going forward.

**7. Future Meetings**

Future meetings locations and dates were discussed. Director Spears will send out dates.

**8. Adjournment**

DIRECTOR SPEARS MOVED TO ADJOURN. DIRECTOR HERRING SECONDED.

The motion carried. The meeting ended at 4:00 p.m.

~~Respectfully submitted,~~

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William N. Coffee, Board Secretary~~

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Minutes approved as read.~~

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Minutes approved as amended.~~

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Alan N. Davidson, Board President~~