



## PrairieCat Administrative Council

### Minutes

January 5th, 2024

The Council met on Friday, January 5th, 2024, 10:30 am –1 pm  
In person at the Reddick Public Library District, 1010 Canal Street,  
Ottawa, IL

The meeting will also be available online via Zoom:

<https://prairiecat-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUqf-mtrDstHNeWUPipGNhGb58b55U0MI8i#/registration>

I. Call to order, Welcome and Introductions

Present at Reddick: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat), Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Ashley Huffines (FP), Kimberly Brozovich (RP), Megan Gove (TF), Laura Watson (HC), Julie Wayland (PR), Beth Ryan (JO), Kelly McCully (BD), Michelle Krooswyk (NL), Emily Faulkner (DK),

Present via Zoom: Victoria Blackmer (CV), Alice Groth (EM)

Absent: Penny Bryant (PT)

Huffines (Chair-FP) called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

II. Introduction of Visitors and Public Comments

There were no visitors or public comments.

III. Review Agenda for Additions/Changes

Coulter (PrairieCat) changed item B under Administrative Issues from saying closed meeting minutes to closed meeting recordings.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. Approve minutes for December 1st, 2023, PrairieCat Administrative Council meeting.
- b. Approve financial report for November 2023
- c. Approve check registers.
- d. Statistical reports

**MOTION #1**

**Gove (TF) moved and Ryan (JO) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. There was no discussion on the motion.**

**\*Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

**Ayes: 9**

**Nays: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

V. Membership Update

- a. Update on new and upgrading members.  
Smith (PrairieCat) Putnam County Primary School Goes Live on Monday,

January 8<sup>th</sup>. Winnebago will Go Live during the week of January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Everything is going well as Winnebago progresses. Huffines (FP) stated that the Winnebago Director reached out to her and is very happy with the progress of joining PrairieCat and how helpful the PrairieCat staff has been throughout the transition.

- b. Update on current training and engagement projects  
Smith (PrairieCat) stated that the Knippel (PrairieCat) and herself continue to work on loading information into the new CRM, LibConnect. This is an internal tool for the staff to help better track member engagement. We are hoping to launch it to the rest of the staff in February/March.

Coulter (PrairieCat) mention that Smith, Knippel and herself did a site visit at Clinton Township Public Library after the Finance Meeting in December. They have a relatively new Director.

## VI. Administrative Issues

- a. Review and discussion, FY25 draft budget  
Coulter (PrairieCat) discussed the FY25 draft budget. The revenue this year is about equal to what we receive in FY24 from RAILS. However, we have to deduct for accounting services and the phone dialer implementation provided by RAILS. After those deductions, we are about \$1,600 short from last year. The accountants want us to present the cash revenues from the RAILS grant but not present the accounting services or phone dialer in the expenditures. The Finance Committee did not like this lack of transparency and have requested we have a meeting with the accountants to better understand their reasoning.

Coulter continued stating this budget includes a 3% staff salary increase for all staff is included, as well as a 1% merit increase. The 3% amount is based on early estimations. RAILS is using a 3% estimate, as well. We are currently benchmarking our positions and waiting for that information to come back before making a final decision, however these percentiles are a "good guess". The per-library fee for both fully participating and basic online circulating members has been increased. The FY24 levels were \$3427 FP/\$2399 BO. A 5% increase was added to the FP cost and the BO also adjusted, to bring the new per library charge to \$3618 FP/\$2533 BO. Although we have kept this increase at 3.5% over the last few years, we were seeing an imbalance between larger and smaller library fee increases. This higher flat-fee increase is intended to "even out" the costs to smaller and larger libraries more equitably and helps absorb the doubt digit increases we are seeing in insurance and other costs, as well. Capital reserves costs were held at the FY24 level. According to our bylaws, we are required to contribute at least \$25,000. Given that we have been contributing well over that for several years, and are again contributing well over that threshold, it was felt that we could leave this number flat for FY25. This will help with the overall increase across the entire consortium. This is another area that the Finance Committee had questions. They have requested that we look into pulling Capital Reserves out of the operating budget and have it maintain its own budget. Hosting fees were adjusted up 5%, as the Finance Committee desires to recoup this cost in the fee formula. Union List per library and capital reserve fees have been recalibrated to reflect the rate of 25% of the Fully Participating rates, as detailed in the General Policy Manual. A remote PUG Day is reflected, as was instructed by

Administrative Council. This decision was based on feedback we have received from members via the recent Strategic Planning survey that reflected a desire to alternate between in-person and remote events. Administrative Council would like to return to an every-other-year in person structure. Increases to insurance that we experienced in FY24 are reflected, as well as an estimate of a 10% increase in the last six months of FY25. This budget also includes short term disability insurance. This budget reflects our new IMRF rate for FY24, which will be 11.9%, a reduction from the 12.92% we have had in the previous year. This budget reflects costs for the addition of the upgraded, cloud-hosted phone notification system from Innovative. I have also included the cost for Encore hosting (aprox. \$8,900) as it was shown that members wish to keep Encore up for an extended period. I have not included the cost for Vega Promote in this budget. We know that we will need to implement the LX Starter notices product in FY25, and it was felt that we may not have time to also implement Promote for FY25 as well. If the membership decides to move forward with Promote, we will bring it to Delegates for a separate vote and fund through capital reserves, if needed. My assumption would be that we may begin implementation in FY25, but most likely will go live on Promote in FY26.

Krooswyk (NL) asked what is included in the Consulting line item. Coulter replied those are for fees for Amanda Standerfer when she facilitates events, such as the Resource Sharing Summit, for PrairieCat. Krooswyk also asked what the Public Relations line is. Coulter said she would have to double check but believes this is for PrairieCat branded shirts/jackets for the staff. Huffines suggested presenting more detail on the membership fees and how it is calculated at Delegates Assembly to help everyone have a better understanding. Coulter and the Council agreed.

- b. ACTION: Review closed meeting minutes, approve any appropriate for deletion

Coulter (PrairieCat) stated that the only closed meeting recording from 18 months ago is Coulter's annual performance review from June of 2022. This is the only meeting up for recording deletion and its recommended the Council approves the recording deletion.

**MOTION #2**

**Gove (TF) moved and Faulkner (DK) seconded to approve the deletion of eligible closed meeting recordings. There was no discussion on the motion.**

**\*Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

**Ayes: 10**

**Nays: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

- c. ACTION: Review, discussion, and approval, change to remote work policy  
Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that in the PrairieCat Employee Handbook, under the General Expectation of the Remote Work Conduct Policy, we would like to add the line that states:

If you intend to work from a location that is not your remote location and outside of our service area, you must clear this with your supervisor and

the Director first. Working from a remote area outside of the PrairieCat service area is permissible on special occasions and for a specific delimited time. Preapproval is required.

**MOTION #3**

**Gove (TF) moved and McCully (BD) seconded to approve the changes made to the Remote Work Policy. There was no discussion on the motion.**

**\*Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

**Ayes: 10**

**Nays: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

- d. ACTION: Review, discussion, and approval, compensation policy for redlined staff members  
Coulter (PrairieCat) stated, as discussed at the last Administrative Council meeting, we have added a paragraph to the Performance Reviews/Salary Adjustments Policy in the Employee Handbook regarding red-circled employees. It states:

An employee with an annual compensation above the approved pay scale after regular annual salary increases, is "Red-Circled". To create an equal and consistent pay structure, any percentage amount over the top of the pay scale for that year will be awarded to the employee in a lump sum payment on the first payroll after the salary increases go into effect. This will also include any merit increases that are awarded and earned by the employee.

**MOTION #4**

**Wayland (PR) moved and Ryan (JO) seconded to approve changes to the Performance Reviews/Salary Adjustment policy to include "red-circled" employees. There was no discussion on the motion.**

**\*Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

**Ayes: 10**

**Nays: 0**

**Abstentions: 0**

- e. Review and discussion, Delegates Assembly agenda  
Coulter (PrairieCat) presented the agenda for the January 31, 2024 Delegates Assembly meeting. A "Review of Budget Design" will be added in before the "Review, PrairieCat Draft FY25 Budget and Fees" as discussed earlier in the meeting. The Council agrees to the agenda with the addition.

VII. Ad Hoc Committee Updates

- a. Resource Sharing Committee – no report  
b. Finance Committee – report from December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023  
Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that the Finance Committee met on December 21<sup>st</sup> and discussed the draft FY25 budget. The Committee recommended looking into pulling Capital Reserves out of the operating budget and move it to its own separate budget. The Committee also wanted clarification from accounting on why the in-kind services from RAILS were not reflected as a

line item on the budget and the RAILS grant was lessened that amount.

- VIII. Review of Meeting – what worked and what didn't.  
The meeting went well.
- IX. Public Comments  
There were no public comments.
- X. Adjournment  
The meeting adjourned at 11:36 am.
- XI. Next Meeting – Friday, February 9th, DeKalb Public Library

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