

PrairieCat Administrative Council
Minutes
April 4, 2025

The Council met on Friday, April 4, 2025, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm in person at the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, IL The meeting will also be available online via Zoom.

[Register to attend the meeting](https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-administrative-council-meeting-2025-04-04) (<https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-administrative-council-meeting-2025-04-04>).

1. Call to order, welcome and introductions

Present at DeKalb Public Library: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Kimberly Brozovich (RP), Beth Ryan (JO), Jenna Diedrich (GA), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat), Kelly McCully (BD), Julie Wayland (PR), Ashley Huffines (FP), Laura Watson (HC), Barbara Posinger (SA), Michelle Krooswyk (NL), Emily Faulkner (DK)

Present via Zoom: Shelby O'Hara (PrairieCat)

Absent: Megan Gove (TF)

Krooswyk (Chair-NL) called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

2. Introduction of visitors and public comments

There were no public comments. Kat Solheim introduced herself as working with Ryan (JO) as a part of her practicum.

3. Review agenda for addition/changes

There were no revisions.

4. Consent agenda

4.1. Approve minutes for March 7, 2025, PrairieCat Administrative Council meeting

4.2. Approve financial report for February 2025

4.3. Approve check registers

4.4. Statistical reports

MOTION #1

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

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 10

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

5. Membership update

5.1. Update on new and upgrading members

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that Mills and Petrie who is upgrading from Union List to Basic Online has set a Go Live date of May 19, 2025.

5.2. Update on current training and engagement projects

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that the Resource Sharing Summit is coming up next week, on April 11, 2025, at the DeKalb Public Library. We have several great presentations lined up and there are about 50 people registered. The homepage builder and user role courses are now available on TalentLMS. The homepage builder Q&A sessions are scheduled for April 22 and 24, 2025. We do require attendees for the Q&A sessions to have completed the homepage builder course on TalentLMS before attending the Q&A. We have also begun our monthly IPLAR Q&A sessions.

Smith said that PUG Day is in full planning mode. We are finalizing outside presenters and have put a call out for program proposals to the membership.

5.2.1. Public Library Representation (Tier list), FY26

Coulter (PrairieCat) explained the Membership Tier list for FY26. This list stayed the

same as FY25 aside from the addition of Mills and Petrie Memorial Library and Gymnasium.

5.2.2. Membership eligibility report (eligibility to move up or down)

Smith (PrairieCat) stated the Administrative Council annually reviews Membership Levels and Eligibility as outlined in governance documents. For public libraries, the report details the 3-year average of total operating expenditures as reported in the IPLAR. The PrairieCat fees as a percentage of that is also shown. All of the libraries that spend more than 5% of their operating expenditures on PrairieCat fees are eligible for a lower level of PrairieCat membership yet are choosing the higher level for the services it provides. All Fully Participating members that are required to be in that membership level spend less than 5% of their operating expenditures on PrairieCat fees, with an average of 2%. For school libraries, the report details the 3-year average of enrollment. Polo Public Library District is a Basic Online member, the 3-year average of operating expenditures is \$206,808, which is about \$6,000 over the threshold for Basic Online membership. However, their FY25 operating expenditures have decreased to \$196,408. It is recommended to discuss this situation to see what is best for the library, as they may fluctuate between eligibility levels. All school libraries are in the appropriate membership level based on their eligibility. The Council agreed to talk with Polo and make them aware of the situation but leave them as Basic Online for FY26.

6. Administrative issues

6.1. Review and approval, FY25-FY27 Strategic Plan

Coulter (PrairieCat) explained The Strategic Planning team, comprised of PrairieCat Staff as well as Administrative Council members Jenna Diedrich and Beth Ryan, present the following plan to Administrative Council for review.

To create a cohesive, actionable plan, the Planning Team reviewed the progress towards previous plan goals, conducted a survey of member libraries and surveyed our standing groups and committees. In addition, a planning session was held with staff.

The membership survey was key for understanding current member training needs as well as thoughts about PrairieCat leadership, governance, culture, and overall member satisfaction. The survey was completed by 80 consortium members. 87.5% of participants represented public library members, and 82.5% represented libraries that are full participants in PrairieCat's services. 51.25% of respondents were directors, the remainder of respondents being from various positions within the libraries.

At the September in-person staff meeting, staff reviewed the current strategic directions and goals. Staff focused on possible revised activities to achieve the plan goals, and the most popular ideas were compiled. Using these activity ideas, members of PrairieCat committees were surveyed to rank suggestions, as well as suggest new activities for goals that they had.

Results from the staff and committee surveys were combined with the results from the member survey. Ideas/activities were then ranked, and a new strategic plan was formulated. The Strategic Planning team then reviewed the new plan and is now passing it on to Administrative Council for approval.

MOTION #2

Huffiness (FP) moved and McCully (BD) seconded to approve the strategic plan for FY25-27. There was no discussion on the motion.

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 10

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

6.2. Appoint nominating committee members

Coulter (PrairieCat) stated in the coming fiscal year; the following Administrative Council members' terms are expiring. Two of the members who are expiring are eligible to run again, and two are terming off, having completed two consecutive terms. The Council needs to appoint a nominating committee to arrange for the coming election.

Emily Faulkner, Tier 1 seat: Terming off.

Laura Watson, Academic/School/Special seat: Terming off

Kelly McCully, Tier 2 seat: eligible to run again

Kim Brozovich, At-large seat: eligible to run again

Ryan (JO) and Wayland (PR) volunteered for the Nominating Committee.

6.3. Review and recommendation to Delegates Assembly, FY26 budget and fees

Coulter (PrairieCat) shared the proposed budget for FY26. This includes a 3% staff salary increase (COLA) and 1% merit increase but also reflects the salary re-alignments we discussed last year due to our benchmarking survey outcomes. As we discussed, these scenarios reflect a combined per library fee and hosting fee, with each receiving a 5% increase over last year. Reserves were calculated at 2% of expenditures. There were a couple of changes made from the last draft review, however. Revenues derived from interest income have been adjusted down a bit per advice from our accountants given current market projections.

The new costs for the replacement mobile app were also added. The costs are again shown as being reimbursed by the participating members, however the installation costs of \$15,000 are shown as being taking from reserves. It is our goal to fund the mobile app for all circulating members in FY27. This budget was reviewed by the Finance Committee at their 3/20/2025 meeting and recommended to the Administrative Council. The Council agrees to send the draft FY26 budget to the Delegates Assembly for approval.

Huffines (FP) asked if RAILS has said anything about the current situation regarding IMLS funding. Coulter responded yes, she has been in contact with RAILS and RAILS has sent out an email and article detailing what they receive from IMLS every year. This money from IMLS is usually targeted toward delivery. They are confident they will still receive their grants for this spring. However, the IMLS funding law expires in September. If this funding is not continued after September, this could be a problem for RAILS delivery service.

6.4. Review and discussion, Mobile app recommendation

Coulter (PrairieCat) stated, as you may know, the existing contract with OCLC/Capira for our mobile app expires in October of 2025. Currently, 57 member libraries participate in this project, and more have expressed interest once the new contract is in place.

PrairieCat operates as an intermediary with these sites, paying for the costs and then charging the libraries to reimburse the consortium. In this way, the project has no impact on the consortium's expenditures.

Over the past months, the UX Committee has done several demonstrations and reviewed the written responses from vendors. We received responses from Innovative Interfaces, OCLC/Capira, Communico, and Bibliocommons. When analyzing pricing, we requested costs for the existing participants, but we also desired to see costs for providing the service to every circulating library. Coulter included the scoring done by the UX committee based on the demonstrations and written responses that were received. Also included was the costing information received from all the vendors.

Innovative costing includes a base fee, which includes 25 individual "templates". These templates allow for each library to brand the app with their own logo, colors, showcases, etc. If more templates are added, each costs an additional \$225 per year. In FY26, the cost reflected in the budget includes templates for each of the current 57 participants. Costing also includes a \$15,000 installation fee.

The most recent budget draft is configured to reflect taking the \$15,000 in installation fees from reserves. If we do not cover this cost from reserves and we move forward in FY27 with expansion to all circulating members, we will otherwise need to come up with a reimbursement solution for the existing members of the project, since they would have had to shoulder those costs in the coming year. The Finance committee decided that a more sensible approach would be to take this install cost from reserves in FY26.

At the Finance committee meeting on 3/20, the committee agreed to recommend the Innovative solution to the Administrative Council, using the plan outlined above for reimbursement in FY26 and considering expanding the service to the entire consortium in FY27.

Looking down the road to FY27, a suggestion was made to provide fully participating libraries with their individual template as part of their fees. We would then charge the per-template fee of \$225 to any basic online library that wants to brand their mobile app separately. In this way, we are providing fully participating libraries with another benefit of their membership level. Expanding the benefits of fully participating membership is something we have been discussing for some time now.

Coulter also scheduled a demo with the libraries who currently use the mobile so they can see what their new product on April 15, 2025. This will give them a chance to see the Innovative mobile app and how it will work before voting on it at the Delegates Assembly meeting.

6.5. Review, Delegates Assembly agenda

Coulter (PrairieCat) shared the draft agenda for the April 30, 2025, Delegates Assembly meeting. Ryan (JO) suggested doing a demo of the Innovative mobile app at the Delegates Assembly meeting as well as the demo on the April 15th. Coulter will add that to the agenda.

7. Ad Hoc Committee updates

7.1. Resource Sharing Committee – no report

7.2. Finance Committee – report from 3/20/2025

Ryan (JO) stated that the Finance Committee met at Sycamore Public Library on March 20, 2025. We discussed the budget, including staff raises as well as the realignments, reserves were calculated at 2% of expenditures, the removal of out-of-state travel and the addition of the mobile app. The Committee also discussed moving the meetings to remote meetings, which would require the Delegates Assembly approving changes to the Bylaws.

1. Review of meeting, what worked and what did not

The meeting went well.



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2. Public comments

There were no public comments.

3. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

4. Next meeting - Friday, May 9, 2025, at the Princeton Public Library