

PrairieCat Finance Committee Minutes September 18, 2025

The Committee met on Thursday, September 18, 2025, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm in person at the Sycamore Public Library, 103 East State Street, Sycamore, IL 60178-1440 and at the RAILS Coal Valley Service Center., 220 W. 23rd Street Ave, Coal Valley, IL 61240. The meeting will also be available online via Zoom.

Register to attend the meeting: <https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-finance-committee-meeting-2025-09-18>

We require an in-person quorum for this meeting.

1. Call to order, introductions

Present at Sycamore: Beth Ryan (Chair-JO), Lauren Offerman (TC), Kim Halsey (SY), Maria Meachum (WL), Nick Weber (WO),

Present at Coal Valley: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Bryon Lear (MX), Angela Campbell (RP), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat)

Present via Zoom:

Absent: Megan Gove (TF), Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Michael Skwara (HC)

Ryan (JO) called the meeting to order at 10:36 am

2. Introduction of guests and public comments

There were no guests or public comments.

3. Approve minutes from June 12, 2025, meeting

Motion #1: Offerman (TC) moved and Meachum (WL) seconded to approve the June 12, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. Motion carried by vocal affirmation.

4. Review and discussion, PrairieCat FY27 draft budget and fees

Coulter (PrairieCat) shared the draft FY27 budgets. Four versions were shown. The first two show a 3% staff salary increase for all staff is included, as well as a 1% merit increase. The first shows the mobile app costs rolled into the library fees, the second does not. This cost would be \$41,625 in FY27 for all libraries. Coulter added the cost of the “base” app (\$18,589.50) into the Information Services line and then added a “mobile app fee” to the App A to cover the per-template cost of \$229.50. The next two versions show a 2% increase in staff salaries as well as a 1% merit increase, again with and without the mobile app included in fees. The per-library fee for both fully participating and basic online circulating members has been increased, as was the reserves contribution. Both fees were adjusted by 3% in FY27. Meachum (WL) asked what the insurance and how much PrairieCat covers. Coulter explained that PrairieCat pays 80% of the premiums for employee only coverage and 70% of family coverage. Meachum stated that the 3% COLA should be what is given due to the high percentage of increase employees will be paying for their insurance premiums.

Coulter continued, explaining reserves were calculated as 1.86% of the 3% staff salary expenditure and 1.87% of total expenditure of the 2% staff salary budget. Union List per library and reserve fees have been recalibrated to reflect the rate of 25% of the Fully Participating rates, as detailed in the General Policy Manual. This was calculated on the per-library fee and does not include the hosting fees that are incorporated for circulating members. A remote PUG Day is reflected, as was instructed by Administrative Council. This decision was based on feedback we have received from members via Strategic Planning surveys that reflect a desire to alternate between in-person and remote events. Increases to health insurance that we expect in FY26 are reflected at a 13% increase. The increase was not known when this budget was drawn up, however, we had been told it will most likely exceed 11%. We have included an estimate of a 15% increase in the last six months of FY27. This budget also includes short-term disability insurance. Other insurance increases

are reflected based on FY25 numbers. This budget reflects our IMRF rate for FY26, which was 11.29%. We have not received our new rate yet for FY27. This budget also reflects the RAILS grant amount, retaining the same percentile of increase as the FY26 award. We have not received our grant amount currently (generally it is released in November). Both budget scenarios show a Reserves expenditure for a replacement vehicle that will be needed in FY27. This budget also reflects the sunseting of Encore in FY27 and thus saving the Encore hosting fees (approx. \$9,150.00).

Coulter presented two funding options for the mobile app: including the mobile app for all with a base cost of \$229.50 per library fee (resulting in a 7.08% increase) versus keeping it optional with a 3% increase. Weber (WO) asked if Coulter anticipated a large increase in the cost of the app for those using it if we do not include it for everyone. Coulter responded no, the library cost for the app will go up 2% per our contract. Meachum expressed concern about the high cost of including the app for all circulating members. Offerman (TC) asked how many libraries are currently participating in the mobile app. Coulter stated that 71 libraries have signed up for the mobile app, which is close to 60% of the membership. She explained that 16 new libraries joined the mobile app during the transition to the new Innovative app.

The Committee agreed to recommend the 3%/1% staff increase budget without the mobile app for all, with the hopes of garnishing more interest to offer for all in the future.

Ryan (JO) asked if PrairieCat has looked into the cost of joining Find More Illinois, which could reduce the costs for libraries. Coulter agreed to research pricing for Find More Illinois membership.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.

Next meeting: December 18, 2025, 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, in person at the Sycamore Public Library, the Coal Valley Service Center, and online via Zoom