



220 W. 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Coal Valley, IL 61240  
877-542-7257  
support.prairiecat.info

**PrairieCat Finance Committee**  
**Agenda**  
**September 18, 2025**

The Committee will meet 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. 23<sup>rd</sup> 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](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
2. Introduction of guests and public comments
3. Approve minutes from June 12, 2025, meeting (pp. 2-4)
4. Review and discussion, PrairieCat FY27 draft budget and fees (pp. 5-6)
5. Adjournment

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

## **PrairieCat Finance Committee Minutes June 12, 2025**

The Committee met on Thursday, June 12, 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. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Ave, Coal Valley, IL 61240. The meeting will also be available online via Zoom.

Register to attend the meeting: <https://librarylearning.org/event/2025-06-12/prairiecat-finance-committee-meeting>

### **We require an in-person quorum for this meeting.**

#### **1. Call to order, introductions**

Present at Sycamore: Beth Ryan (Chair-JO), Megan Gove (TF), 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), Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat)

Present via Zoom: Elena Mendoza (RAILS)

Absent: Michael Skwara (HC)

Ryan (JO) called the meeting to order at 10:30 am

#### **2. Introduction of guests and public comments**

There were no public comments. Elena Mendoza (RAILS), accountant for RAILS and PrairieCat, introduced herself.

3. Approve minutes from March 20, 2025, meeting

**Motion #1: Gove (TF) moved and Offerman (TC) seconded to approve the March 20, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. There was no discussion on the motion. Motion carried by vocal affirmation.**

4. Review and discussion, PrairieCat investment options and recommendations to the Administrative Council

Mendoza (RAILS) explained the investment options for PrairieCat stating, as we re-evaluate investment options this year, we must consider the economic uncertainty that may impact the Federal Reserve's expectations of two .25% interest rate cuts for this calendar year, and their interest rate projections of 3.9% and 3.4% for calendar years 2025 and 2026, respectively.

PrairieCat has a long relationship with Bank Orion, and, over the years, they have been extremely responsive and attentive to all of our needs. The rate they offered for their 13-month CD was the highest rate of all quotes received.

PrairieCat has been a client of PMA (Prudent Man Advisors) for almost two years, and we have a depository account as well as two current CDs which are maturing at the end of August. PMA came in slightly lower for their 12-month CD compared to Bank Orion but offered a significantly better rate for their 24-month CD.

As mentioned earlier, interest rates fluctuate often, but reports from the Federal Open Market Committee indicate that the Federal Reserve has had a conservative approach regarding lowering interest rates due to uncertainty with the economic outlook. They have held interest rates steady at their last three meetings and their projections for calendar years 2025 and 2026 remain unchanged since their December 2024 meeting, at 3.9% and 3.4%, respectively.

Mendoza continued stating since interest rates are predicted to decrease in the next two calendar years and with the uncertainty surrounding the economic outlook that could be very impacted by tariffs and inflation, we feel it would be beneficial to ladder the maturity of PrairieCat's CDs. Laddering CDs would spread PrairieCat's investments across two financial institutions with different maturity dates and allows more flexibility in accessing funds if needed. Our recommendation would be, once the two CDs with PMA mature on August 27,

2025, for a total of \$452,200 plus accrued interest, to secure one 24-month CD for less than the \$250,000 FDIC insurance coverage limits including the projected net interest with PMA and another \$250,000 13-month CD with Bank Orion. To do this, PrairieCat will need to move \$250,000 of the matured CD funds from the PMA ISC account to Bank Orion.

The remaining balance in the PMA iPrime money market (ICS) account could either be left there to float with the market and remain available for PrairieCat's immediate use or be transferred to Bank Orion and then Illinois Funds for immediate use, if needed. Currently, the average interest rates as of April for the PMA ISC money market account and Illinois Funds are 4.207% and 4.434%, respectively.

Coulter asked if Illinois Funds is doing better than PMA right now? Mendoza stated yes.

Weber (WO) asked if one institution has the highest rates for both the 12 month and 24-month CDs should we take a lower rate to diversify the institutions? Mendoza explained that the most important thing is to keep the amounts below the \$250,000 FDIC insurance limit and splitting between a 12 month and 24-month CD due to the market volatility and being able to access those funds earlier if need be. Campbell (RP) stated we should do what is most advantageous to PrairieCat.

The Committee agreed to recommend splitting the money between a 12- or 13-month CD and a 24-month CD with the institutions that have the higher interest rates at the time of the Administrative Council meeting in August.

## 5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:48 am.

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



Date: 9/18/2025

To: PrairieCat Finance Committee

From: Carolyn Coulter, Director

Re: FY27 draft budget

**Executive Summary:**

Attached are four versions of the draft budget for FY27. The first includes a 3% staff salary increase (COLA) and 1% merit increase and includes the mobile app for all circulating libraries. The second shows the same staff salary increases without the mobile app included in fees. The next two show a staff increase of 2% with a 1% merit increase. The first shows the costs with the mobile app included in the fees, and the second does not. These drafts also show the library fee and hosting fee each receiving a 3% increase over last year. Reserves were calculated at approximately 2% of expenditure.

**Detailed description:**

Attached you will find the FY27 budget.

- Four versions are 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. I have 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 to 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.
- 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 is not yet known for the remainder of FY26; however, we have 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).

Please find the attached draft budget scenario, Appendix A for the 2% and 3% salary scenarios, and Union List charges.