



220 W. 23rd Ave.
Coal Valley, IL 61240
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support.prairiecat.info

PrairieCat Administrative Council Minutes January 7, 2026

The Council met on Friday, January 7, 2026, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm in person at the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak St, 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-2026-01-07) (<https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-administrative-council-meeting-2026-01-07>).

1. Call to order, welcome and introductions

Present at DeKalb Public Library: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Julie Wayland (PR), Kimberly Brozovich (RP), Beth Ryan (JO), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat), Barbara Posinger (SA), Jenna Diedrich (GA), Megan Gove (TF), Lauren Offerman (TC), Kelly McCully (BD), Michelle Krooswyk (NL), Stephanie Nissen (RU), Penny Bryant (PT)

Present via Zoom: Shelby O'Hara (PrairieCat)

Absent:

Gove (Chair-TF) called the meeting to order at 10:38 am.

2. Introduction of visitors and public comments

Gove (TF) welcomed Offerman (TC) as a new member of the Council.

3. Review agenda for addition/changes

Coulter (PrairieCat) added a discussion regarding Delegates Assembly locations for FY2027.

4. Consent agenda

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

4.2. Approve financial report for October and November 2025

4.3. Approve check registers

4.4. Statistical reports

MOTION #1

Krooswyk (NL) moved and McCully (BD) seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. There was no discussion on the motion.

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

5. Membership update

5.1. Update on new and upgrading members

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that there has been some interest among the Union List membership regarding upgrading. Annawan-Alba, Bureau Valley CUSD, Forreston Public Library. Herscher CUSD is interested in becoming an ILL barcode library, so we have a discussion scheduled with them next week.

5.2. Update on current training and engagement projects

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that we have had 11 new directors at member libraries in the last quarter, mostly due to retirements. The next New Directors Welcome will be March 10th. We have wrapped up the mobile app implementation project with a survey. We received 32 responses out of 71. Overall, the feedback was very positive, and people were satisfied with the project implementation. O'Hara (PrairieCat) has completed a set of YouTube videos that are patron-facing or could be used for staff. In the coming months we will be working on getting the more formal trainings together for the admin side of the app, the CMS. We will then begin working on the account portal account linking switch. Smith stated this has been moved to February.

6. Administrative issues

6.1. Review and discussion, draft FY2027 budget and fees

Coulter (PrairieCat) presented two versions of the proposed budget for FY27. The first includes a 3% staff salary increase (COLA) and 1% merit increase for all staff. The second removes the COLA increase from the director's salary but retains the merit increase of 1%. The option to expand the mobile app project to all members is not included in either version. Both budgets show an increase to the library fee and hosting fee of 3% increase over last year. Reserves were calculated at approximately 2% of expenditure. Coulter highlighted that these budgets include a remote PUG Day, and a significant increase to insurance. LIMRiCC costs increased 14.32% in the first six months of the budget and we are estimating another 15% increase on top of that in the last six months. If the insurance costs continue going in the direction they are, we will likely need to consider incentivizing employees to go on spousal insurance and/or incentivizing the high-deductible plan with HSA. The draft budgets reflect a slight increase to the RAILS grant, as well as their charge of \$54,000 for accounting services. This budget also shows the purchase of a new vehicle, however, that \$35,000 will be coming out of reserves. Another savings in this budget is the sunseting of Encore, which will save us \$9,000.

Coulter explained that the biggest expenditure is the staff salaries. The second draft budget reflects a 3% COLA increase for all staff aside from the director. The 1% merit increase is applied to all staff in this version as well. Removing the COLA increase for the director saves the organization \$4,730.17 in salary, taxes and retirement costs, reducing the overall annual percentage of increase over last year to 4.77%, versus an increase of 5.04% in the previous version. After discussions the Council determined that removing the COLA from the Director is not the appropriate way to move forward, instead they suggested Coulter present a budget with a 1% reserve savings instead of 2%.

6.2. ACTION: Review closed meeting minutes for the last 18 months

Coulter (PrairieCat) stated that the only closed meeting minutes in the last 18 months was her annual review.

MOTION #2

Diedrich (GA) moved and Posing (SA) seconded to approve the closed meeting minutes remain closed. There was no discussion on the motion.

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

6.3. Discussion, sunseting Encore, communication planning

Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that she would like to sunset Encore as of July 1, 2026. It will save us money in the budget as stated earlier. Innovative has stated that they will not make Encore compliant with new ADA guidelines and will cease support for the product in the future. We will start sending communications to the membership about this at the end of March or beginning of April.

6.4. Discussion, disposal of old staff laptops

Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that according to our equipment disposal policy, items valued under \$1,000 can be disposed of at the Director's discretion. She would like to reserve 4 laptops for loaners if needed and offer the remainder to staff who would like to purchase them. We currently have 13 laptops that have been replaced. The Council agreed to offer the sale of the remaining laptops to the staff and any remaining post for sale on the RAILS website.

6.5. Review discussion, Delegates Assembly agenda for January 2026

Coulter (PrairieCat) shared the agenda for the upcoming Delegates Assembly meeting. She pointed out that the main discussion point will be the draft FY27 budget. We will also have a presentation on cybersecurity by PrairieCat's Systems Administrator, Matt Maturo. The Council agreed with the agenda presented.

Ryan (JO) requested that at the in-person Delegates Assembly meeting in April, the



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PrairieCat staff introduce themselves to help the membership put names with faces.

Coulter and the Council agreed to have all the PrairieCat staff at the April Delegates Assembly meeting. Gove (TF) also suggested getting headshots of all the staff and adding those headshots to email signatures. Coulter will arrange for staff photographs at the next in-person staff meeting.

6.6. Discussion, Delegates Assembly meeting locations FY2027

Knippel (PrairieCat) explained that Cherry Valley Public Library District had to back out of hosting the Delegates Assembly meeting in January due to construction. Due to the short notice PrairieCat will not add another location to replace Cherry Valley for the January 28th Delegates Assembly. We do need to consider what locations we would like to have set up for FY27. At a previous Administrative Council meeting the suggested locations were Cherry Valley, then Marengo-Union, and then North Suburban. Knippel did reach out to Marengo, and they would only be able to host the October meeting in FY27. The Council agreed to add North Suburban. Knippel will reach out to them with meeting dates to confirm their availability to host.

7. Ad Hoc Committee updates

7.1. Resource Sharing Committee – No report

7.2. Finance Committee – Report from Dec 18, 2025

Ryan (JO) stated that the Finance Committee discussed the draft FY27 budget as was covered earlier in this meeting.

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

The meeting went well.

9. Public comments

There were no public comments.



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10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 am.

11. Next meeting - Friday, February 6, 2026, at the Reddick Public Library District