

PrairieCat Administrative Council
Minutes
July 10, 2026

The Council met on Friday, July 10, 2026, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm in person at the Howard Colman Library, Rockford University, Rockford, IL. The meeting will also be available online via Zoom.

[Register to attend the meeting](https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-administrative-council-meeting-2026-07-10) (<https://support.prairiecat.info/events/prairiecat-administrative-council-meeting-2026-07-10>).

1. Call to order, welcome and introductions

Present at Rockford University: Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Chelsey Knippel (PrairieCat), Julie Wayland (PR), Kimberly Brozovich (RP), Barbara Posinger (SA), Lauren Offerman (TC), Stephanie Nissen (RU), Jason Shirley (BY), Emily Schaub (FP), Jenna Diedrich (GA), Dana Fanslow (KR), Kelly McCully (BD), Emily Faulkner (DK)

Present via Zoom: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Elena Mendoza (RAILS)

Absent:

Posinger (Chair-SA) called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

2. Introduction of visitors and public comments

There were no public comments. Elena Mendoza introduced herself and the RAILS Staff Accountant who does the books for PrairieCat.

3. Review agenda for addition/changes

There were no revisions.

4. Consent agenda

4.1. Approve minutes for June 12, 2026, PrairieCat Administrative Council meeting

4.2. Approve financial report for June 2026

4.3. Approve check registers

4.4. Statistical reports

MOTION #1

Schaub (FP) 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: 10

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

5. Membership update

5.1. Update on new and upgrading members

Smith (PrairieCat) stated that as of July 1st, we have a couple Union List members who have withdrawn from PrairieCat. Dakota Community Unit School District is a school library who had a hard time maintaining compliance with PrairieCat and they decided to withdraw. UnityPoint Health Medical Library closed their library, withdrawing from PrairieCat as a result. PrairieCat staff are working on removing their holdings from the system and updating lists. The Dakota withdrawal has already been approved by Delegates. The UnityPoint withdrawal will be on the July Delegates Assembly agenda for approval. PrairieCat has recently heard from Putnam County Library, who is a Fully Participating member. They have six locations and are closing their Magnolia Library branch. We have set up a call with Putnam County Library to discuss steps moving forward. It seems the physical location has closed but they want to maintain it as a pickup location.

5.2. Update on current training and engagement projects

Smith (PrairieCat) gave an update on training and engagement projects. PrairieCat launched account portal this week. We were a little disappointed to see that it launched during business hours since Innovative had told us that it would launch during non-

business hours in previous conversations. Aside from that, the launch seemed to go smoothly. We had a few reports during the transition time that links were not working, but that's why we did not want the launch to happen during business hours. However, once the update was complete, we were able to update the links, and everything appeared to work properly.

Smith explained that Patron Assist is a feature that PrairieCat and the User Experience Committee are investigating. Patron Assist is a feature that allows a library staff member to enter a patron's barcode and then view and control the patron's account from the patron's side, such as place holds, pay fines, etc. There are different levels of this feature so the User Experience Committee is discussing and will share their recommendations once a decision has been reached.

Smith discussed the upcoming PUG Day 2026 virtual event, stating that the webinars have been created and an open registration announcement will be sent out to the membership next week. We will be promoting the event throughout the upcoming months. Smith also discussed the PUG Day 2027 in person event. She has been in contact with NIU Rockford as the location for the event. Due to the ARSL Library Conference in Milwaukee in 2027, we are planning to hold the PUG Day event earlier than normal to give space between the two events. We are working on reserving a date with NIU Rockford.

Smith stated that this is the 20th anniversary of PrairieCat as an organization. She asked for suggestions or ideas about ways to mark the anniversary at the July Delegates Assembly meeting. Coulter (PrairieCat) stated that we should mention it at Delegates Assembly and we could put together a slide show of some sort. Faulkner (DK) suggested showing 20 most popular items over time or 20 most popular items in the first year. Coulter said she will email the staff to see if they have old emails or other information on things that were happening 20 years ago. Nissen (RU) suggested a timeline with the highlights of the 20-year history would be neat to see. Coulter thanked the group for suggestions and stated she will work with the PrairieCat staff to put something together.

Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that previously the agenda for this meeting included a discussion about the new Vega SMS Interact product contract. However, we began seeing some Sierra libraries having issues with the product. We will table the contract for now and wait until more Sierra libraries are up and running on the SMS Interact product. Coulter removed this discussion from the Administrative Council agenda for today.

6. Administrative issues

6.1. ACTION: Appoint OMA and FOIA officers for the fiscal year

Coulter (PrairieCat) stated each year we ask a member of the Council to volunteer to be an OMA and FOIA officer along with Coulter herself. Offerman (TC) volunteered.

MOTION #2

Schaub (FP) moved and Diedrich (GA) seconded to approve Coulter (PrairieCat) and Offerman (TC) as the FY27 OMA and FOIA officers. There was no discussion on the motion.

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

6.2. Sign check signature cards

Knippel (PrairieCat) gathered the necessary signatures for the bank signature card.

6.3. Review board manual (online)

Knippel (PrairieCat) explained that the FY27 Board Manual is not yet complete but will be posted by the end of the month. The Council will be notified when the FY27 Board Manual has been posted and is available for viewing.

6.4. ACTION: Changes to the General Policy Manual regarding Administrative Council votes on financial matters

Coulter stated that the current language of the Fiscal Accountability Policy in the General Policy Manual reads as follows:

“Roll call action will be taken by the PRAIRIECAT Administrative Council on all financial matters. Directors with economic conflicts of interest shall abstain from voting, in accordance with the Public Officer Prohibited Activities Act (50 ILCS 105) or any other applicable state statute, rule or regulation.”

This contradicts our general voting policy in the Bylaws, which is stated as:

“SECTION 9. VOTING. Except as provided elsewhere in these Bylaws, a simple majority of a quorum shall be sufficient to pass on all matters. All votes will be taken at a PRAIRIECAT Administrative Council meeting. Council Members participating electronically may also vote. No substitutes or proxies shall be allowed to vote in the place of a Council Member.”

It has been suggested that we revise the existing General Policy Manual to match the existing Bylaws language. The Council agreed to leave both the General Policy Manual and the Bylaws language as is.

6.5. ACTION: Replacement of expiring CD with Bank Orion and the reinvestment of funds in a new CD

Mendoza (RAILS) explained that at the end of August 2025, PrairieCat invested \$481,500 in two CDs - one for \$250,000 with Bank Orion, at a 4.05% interest rate maturing on September 29, 2026, and a second for \$231,500 with the Public Treasury Management and Advisory (PTMA), at a 3.969% interest rate maturing on August 27, 2027. We have reached out to financial institutions to inquire about investment options for the Bank Orion CD that will be maturing at the end of September. The remainder of PrairieCat's funds are maintained in three interest bearing accounts. The checking account with Bank Orion holds the bulk of PrairieCat's funds with a balance of \$953,615 as of June 26. The current interest rate on this account equals the rate offered by Bank Orion for their money market accounts (.30%). The Illinois Funds money market account balance is currently \$332,459 and has earned year-to-date interest of \$11,581, with rates that closely track the rates set



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by the Federal Reserve. The PTMA iPrime ISC money market account balance is currently \$5,305 and has earned year-to-date interest of \$492, with rates that also closely track the rates set by the Federal Reserve.

As we re-evaluate investment options this year, PrairieCat must keep in mind the current level of inflation and the recent change in leadership that may affect the Federal Reserve's interest rate expectations. At their last four meetings, the Federal Reserve has held the target borrowing rate between 3.50% and 3.75%. The projections they shared in their June 2026 meeting for calendar year 2026 and 2027 interest rates are at 3.8% and 3.6%, respectively.

Mendoza stated it is recommended that PrairieCat secure a 24-month CD with PTMA to lock in the higher interest rates for longer. The investment would be completed once the 13-month CD with Bank Orion matures on September 29, 2026, for an amount that would keep the total investment under the \$250,000 FDIC insurance coverage limit, including the projected net interest earned over the CD term. To do this, PrairieCat will need to transfer the required investment amount from Bank Orion to the PTMA ISC account.

The remaining earnings and matured CD principal in the Bank Orion account could be transferred to Illinois Funds or PTMA to float with the market. Currently, the average interest rates as of May for the PTMA ISC money market account and Illinois Funds are 3.510% and 3.737%, respectively.

These investment options were reviewed at PrairieCat's Finance Committee meeting on June 18. The committee agreed to recommend investing in a 24-month DTC-CD or traditional CD, whichever has the highest interest rate at the time to lock in interest rates for longer. Also, the remaining funds would be transferred to IL Funds or PTMA, whichever has the best interest rate at the time.

MOTION #4

Diedrich (GA) moved and Shirley (BY) seconded to approve investing in a 24-month DTC-CD or traditional CD, whichever has the highest interest rate at the time to lock in interest rates for longer. Also, the remaining funds would be transferred to IL Funds or PTMA, whichever has the best interest rate at the time. There was no discussion on the motion.

***Motion carried by vocal affirmation**

Ayes: 11

Nays: 0

Abstentions: 0

6.6. Explanation of mistake made concerning North Chicago self-check and refund due to them
Coulter (PrairieCat) explained that there was a mistake made by placing North Chicago's add library charge to the wrong spreadsheet when they went live with us. For the last three years, PrairieCat has been charging North Chicago for having a self-check, which they do not have. This error led to a refund of \$4,853.89.

6.7. Review of Delegates Assembly agenda

Coulter (PrairieCat) reviewed the Delegates Assembly agenda with the Council. She noted that a presentation for the 20-year anniversary of PrairieCat will be added to the agenda. No other revisions were made.

7. Ad Hoc Committee updates

7.1. Resource Sharing Committee – no report

7.2. Finance Committee – Report from 6/18/2026

Offerman (TC) stated that the Finance Committee met on June 18, 2026, and discussed the SMS contract that Coulter (PrairieCat) talked about earlier in the meeting and our CD options that Mendoza (RAILS) presented earlier as well. Additionally, the Committee looked at and discussed alternative health insurance options that PrairieCat could provide to their



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staff. The Committee did agree on an alternative should the need to revise PrairieCat's coverage options in the future. Because there are so many unknowns at this time, we did not feel it was necessary to present the Committee's recommendation to this body yet.

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

The meeting went well.

9. Public comments

There were no public comments.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:09 am.

11. Next meeting - Friday, August 7, 2026, at Three Rivers Public Library District, Minooka, IL