PrairieCat

PrairieCat Administrative Council
Minutes
November 5, 2021

The Council met on Friday, November 5, 2021, 10 am – 12 pm
At the Freeport Public Library, 100 E. Douglas Street, Freeport, IL
In person meeting registration via L2 at https://librarylearning.org/event/11623/register

The council also met virtually due to the coronavirus pandemic in
accordance with rules and procedures contained in section 7(e) of the
OMA as (1) there is a state-issued disaster declaration related to public
health concerns in place over all or part of the jurisdiction of the public
body; (2) the head of the public body determines that an in-person
meeting is not practical or prudent because of the disaster

Register for the Zoom meeting at:

https://railslibraries.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJ0rdOqoqzMiE9Oc4Vqq8kpOLxKFerwrYBsH

PUBLIC COMMENT: Members of the public will be able to chat or speak during the virtual Zoom
meeting or in person during the public comment. Public comments may be submitted via email to
Carolyn.Coulter@railslibraries.info at least two hours before the meeting.

I.   Call to order, Welcome and Introductions
      Present in Freeport: Carolyn Coulter (PrairieCat), Beth Ryan (JO), Emily Porter (BY),
      Chelsey DeSplinter (PrairieCat), Laura Watson (HC), Ashley Huffines (FP)

      Present via Zoom: Michelle Krooswyk (NL), Victoria Blackmer (CV), Patricia Smith
      (Chair-RO), Laura Long (EM), Emily Faulkner (DK), Charm Ruhnke (PU)

      Absent: Elizabeth Smith (PrairieCat), Penny Bryant (PT)

      Smith (Chair-RO) called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

II.   Introduction of Visitors and Public Comments
      There were no visitors or public comments.

III. Review Agenda for Additions/Changes
      There were no changes.

IV.   Consent Agenda
      a. Approve minutes for October 1, 2021 PrairieCat Administrative Council
         meeting
      b. Approve financial report for September 2021
      c. Approve check register
      a. Statistical reports

      MOTION #1
      Porter (BY) moved and Ruhnke (PU) seconded <u>to approve the consent</u>
      <u>agenda as presented</u>. There was no discussion on the motion.

      Motion carried by roll call.
      Ayes: 10
      Nayes: 0

Abstentions: 0
Discussion:

V. Membership Update

Coulter (PrairieCat) gave an update about the current System Coordinator open position. The position has been open and posted since mid-August. There was a good batch of applicants right in the beginning, but those did not work out. We have hired HR Source to assist in the recruiting process. They rewrote the job post, and we are getting qualified applicants again and are setting up interviews.

Coulter stated that PrairieCat received a call from North Boone High School inquiring about pulling out of PrairieCat Union List and going to barcode. The high school is not doing as many requests as they use to and they feel this would be more cost effective. Coulter will be in contact with North Boone next week to speak to them.

Coulter said there are a couple of members who came forward at the Delegates Assembly with complaints regarding Sierra's operations. She is gathering information from those members to take their concerns to Innovative as we are signing the new Vega contract. One member has specific issues with Acquisitions. Coulter is setting up a Q&A with a knowledgeable Innovative staff member/s on the topic of Acquisitions. Any PrairieCat members who would be interested in this type of meeting are welcome to attend. Another member has requested Global Update, which PrairieCat does not allow member libraries to use. Coulter will offer the use of Rapid Update and hopefully that will meet their needs. This same member suggested investigating a move from Sierra to Polaris. Recent rough quotes from Innovative showed that the migration would cost about $180,000 and the software would cost us between $800,000 - $900,000. This would wipe out PrairieCat and is not an option at present. Questions remain beyond cost, too, regarding the wisdom of moving to another older ILS system owned by the same vendor.

Huffines (FP) passed along the email with the Vega Discover links to her staff that uses Encore and teaches patrons to use Encore. The staff members had very positive feedback, stating Discover is hands down better than what they are currently using.

Coulter addressed the slowness in Sierra in the afternoons. It is a bit strange because it is not across the board and it effects some libraries one day, and different libraries the next. This issue has been escalated with Innovative's level three support. We need to be able to see a larger picture of where it's happening and when. Please be sure to report slowness if your library is experiencing issues. Smith (RO) stated her library was having freezing issue yesterday afternoon. Faulkner (DK) has been experiencing issues as well.

Coulter said finance would like to change to electronic billing instead of paper billing to help with cost savings. If the Council is ok with this, we will move forward with electronic billing, most likely starting in the new year. The Council agrees.

Coulter mentioned that RSA has requested a meeting with Coulter and Smith. RSA's Director and board chair will meet with Coulter and Smith in the next few weeks to discuss how to address and the logistics of a larger meeting concerning PrairieCat and RSA's potential partnership.

VI. Administrative Issues
   a. Review of final FY21 audit
      Coulter (PrairieCat) stated we have received the final audit. The Council approved the audit barring any substantial changes and there were none. Page

eighteen of the board packet outlines three minor changes. Those were: 1. Page 7 - travel expenses, meeting expenses, conference registrations, and vehicle expenses due to COVID-19 travel restrictions were re-calculated at 51,614 2. Page 15 - a paragraph for Illinois Funds was added in the Deposits and Investments section 3. Page 19 – the last sentence in defined contribution plan was moved to a subsequent event paragraph since the date is after the opinion date. The Council's vote on the draft stands.

b. Review of FY23 draft budget, membership fees, capital reserves and hosting fees in light of RAILS grant outcome
Coulter (PrairieCat) is excited about the grant from RAILS. PrairieCat will be receiving $563,000. Coulter suggested keeping the staff merit increase, the 3% increase to the per library charge and capital reserves, 5% to hosting and 3% to Union List. What has changed is the amount for consultants and computers. The amounts did increase and the plan is to use this money in FY23 to start moving away from RAILS. The first thing Coulter would like to focus on is moving the IT infrastructure. While this is not the most costly charge from RAILS, it is the most complex. One of the largest expenses RAILS will be charging PrairieCat for in FY24 is the Bolingbrook building. That cost is $79,300. In Bolingbrook, PrairieCat utilizes four offices, a copier and a printer. Porter (BY) asked if anyone uses the office space. Coulter responded with periodically. Having these employees work from home will help eliminate this cost. If we need co-working space, there are a few options: 1. What would it cost for a desk or two at Burr Ridge? 2. Utilizing member libraries with available space. Faulkner (DK) said if there were employees who needed office space frequently, you could look into renting actual co-working space. Coulter replied it is an option but would like to utilize an option with a much lower cost. Huffines (FP) stated Freeport would have space available.

Coulter mentioned the cost of the Coal Valley office came in at $18,200. This cost is reasonable and would allow PrairieCat to still have a central, physical address. We would keep Coal Valley as an administrative hub and get rid of Bolingbrook. Porter (BY) suggested asking member libraries in the Coal Valley area if they could rent space to PrairieCat for a minimal cost. That way PrairieCat saves money and the money spent is going back to the member library. Coulter said it is something to consider. Ruhnke (PU) brought up liability insurance for those working from home and for the libraries that could potentially be hosting a PrairieCat employee. Coulter will look into it. Coulter also brought up there would probably be telecommuting costs. During COVID, PrairieCat repaid employees internet costs based on their internet bills and how many hours they worked.

Coulter reviewed the cost of Accounting Services. RAILS will charge about $50,000 for continued accounting services they provide to PrairieCat. The number seems high, but the list of services they provide is very robust. The tasks are on page 57-61 and the internal controls go from page 62-73 in the board packet. They provide a lot of work for PrairieCat and it is unlikely that we could hire a bookkeeper to do all of these tasks. However, there are ways to save money here. One is the paperless billing we have previously talked about and the other, which is a vote later on in the meeting, is only cutting eCommerce checks when the are $15 or higher.

c. Discussion, Vega Discover and next steps, addressing issues with Sierra in tandem
Coulter (PrairieCat) stated the next steps would be signing the contract and then continuing to work on the sandbox server and monitoring that development.

d. ACTION: Review and approval of Prairiecat Vaccination policy
Coulter (PrairieCat) stated that at their most recent board meeting, RAILS approved a new Vaccination policy. The policy and procedures are built from those documents, with small changes to accommodate PrairieCat's needs. In particular, the required date for full vaccination has been moved to accommodate our schedule. In addition, the incentive for vaccination has been altered to reflect an incentive of ½ day of personal time (3.75 hours) to be awarded after January 1, 2022. RAILS has vetted their policy and procedures through their legal team, and since no real substantive changes have been made, it was felt that we did not need to engage our lawyers for review, however staff is happy to do so if advised by Administrative Council. Coulter said the Vaccination Policy has now been implemented by OSHA. Since we do not meet OSHA requirements, we are not mandated to implement this policy, however, because RAILS has mandated the policy, it will most likely be a matter of time before they pass the requirement on to PrairieCat since we occupy their buildings.

Ruhnke (PU) asked what PrairieCat does with confidential information, such as the vaccination Card. Coulter responded that each employee has a separate, confidential file where medical and other sensitive documentations are kept.

Faulkner (DK) brought up the fact that PrairieCat staff is mostly working remotely. She asked if it even makes sense to mandate vaccinations. Krooswyk (NL) agreed with Faulkner and also mentioned the incentive of time off can be a slippery slope. For example, an employee with a medical exemption, would they receive the awarded time off? Krooswyk said she's on the fence with the necessity of the policy. Coulter said she believes it is necessary because RAILS has implemented the policy and while we work remotely most of the time, PrairieCat staff is still using the RAILS facilities on a regular basis.

Faulkner expressed concerns that the policy could deter potential employees especially with PrairieCat currently seeking to fill a difficult position.

Huffines (FP) asked if this is something we could table the policy and be ready to pass if/when RAILS enforces this policy on PrairieCat. Coulter said we could do that. Smith (RO) asked if rapid tests would be acceptable. Coulter answered there is no specification on the type of test.

MOTION #2
Huffine (FP) moved and Faulkner (DK) seconded <u>to approve the PrairieCat Vaccination Policy</u>. There was no discussion on the motion.

Motion carried by roll call.
Ayes: 10
Nayes: 0
Abstentions: 0
Discussion:
Porter (BY) questioned the need to pass this yet or if we should wait until RAILS forces the policy. Ryan (JO) said we should pass it now, before we hire a new employee, so we don't risk losing the new employee after they are hired if they disagree with the policy. Passing it now allows PrairieCat to be up front with applicants about the vaccination policy.

a. ACTION: Approve finance to remit ecommerce fees when total reaches $15.00
Coulter (PrairieCat) explained one of the ways to help reduce PrairieCat's accounting costs. It has been PrairieCat's policy to accumulate and issue

quarterly payments (October, January, April, and July) to the membership for their library's eCommerce activity. One-third of the eCommerce checks issued for the July – September 2021 quarter were under $15. The eCommerce activity for each of the members can range from $2,000 to $.10 per quarter. Since the cost of issuing a check (including postage, check stock, envelopes, staff time, board signer time, etc.) for such a small amount of money greatly exceeds most of these small payments, we are proposing that a minimum amount of $15 due to any one member be reached during the fiscal year before any payment is issued. To avoid holding amounts due to the members for longer than one year, all payments pertaining to eCommerce would be paid out to the member libraries annually, regardless of size, with the activity from the final quarter of the fiscal year. This would not change the reporting for monthly eCommerce activity that is posted for the membership on the PrairieCat support site, but it would eliminate the quarterly reports that are emailed to the member's Zimbra accounts for those members that will not be issued a check during the quarter.

Coulter continued that we have encountered several instances of these small checks being accumulated over several periods by the members who rightly feel that these amounts are entirely too small to justify a trip to their bank. In some instances that have stretched over a longer period of time, these checks have been lost, and the staff time to follow-up on these at both the member library and the internal staff levels have greatly exceeded the total amount of the checks.

Porter (BY) suggested an additional option, for opting in for ONLY a one time annual payment. Blackmer (CV) likes Porter's suggestion and stated her library would also opt in for an annual payment.

MOTION #3
Blackmer (CV) moved and Porter (BY) seconded <u>to approve finance remitting eCommerce fees when total reaches $15.00 along with an opt in for an annual payment</u>. There was no discussion on the motion.

Motion carried by roll call.
Ayes: 10
Nayes: 0
Abstentions: 0
Discussion:

VII.   Ad Hoc Committee Updates
   a. Resource Sharing Committee – Report and debrief from Summit 10/21/2021, next steps
      Ruhnke (PU) shared that the Summit was focused on an added value PrairieCat offering, which we are calling PrairieCat Plus. We will be meeting on the 12th to go over the notes from Amanda Standerfer and will bring back a recommendation for a plan for the potential new membership level.

   b. Finance Committee – No report

VIII.   Review of Meeting – what worked and what didn't
        Smith (RO) had a hard time hearing. Suggests using the Owl in smaller rooms going forward.

IX.   Public Comments
        There were no public comments.

X.   Adjournment
      The meeting adjourned at 11:09 am.

      Next Meeting – Friday, December 3, 2021, at Pecatonica Public Library and online via
      Zoom