



Illinois Heartland Library System

MEMO TO: IHLS Board of Directors
FROM: Leslie M. Bednar
DATE: April 23, 2023
RE: FY2024 Board Meetings

As gathering restrictions continue to ease, it is time to consider what in-person meetings look like in the new post-COVID landscape. We want to discuss options for returning to in-person board meetings and how to optimize board member participation. Here is some information that may aid in that conversation.

IHLS Bylaws

Article IV, Section 11, Meetings states:

- a minimum of nine regular meetings per year with date, time, and location determined at the July board meeting (historically we have established those dates at the May board meeting)
- all board and committee meetings are conducted in full compliance of the [Open Meetings Act](#) (5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.) and the [IHLS Policy on Meetings via Electronic Means](#)

IHLS Draft FY2024 Operational Plan

To improve board member engagement, we included opportunities for in-person meetings in the draft FY2024 Operational Plan:

In the Board Support Section under the broad goal Provide support for IHLS board members.

Research and implement tools and activities to improve board engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pair a learning opportunity and dinner with more in-person meetings - Reintroduce Board Networking Events - Schedule an in-person board meeting with RAILS board
--	--

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we offered quarterly in-person professional development opportunities at geographically diverse member libraries, the Illinois State Library, and our three offices. These were held in conjunction with regularly scheduled board meetings. Presentation topics included: Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFs), Taxation and Levies, and Community Engagement. Each session had a local welcome committee comprised of IHLS board members closest to the location. The session location and learning/sharing topic was

IMAGINING TOMORROW ~ DELIVERING POSSIBILITIES TODAY!

announced in advance, and we sent personal invitations to member libraries in the vicinity of the planned location. This was a great opportunity to learn from each other as well as meet with staff and board from member libraries.

We propose four in-person meetings for the FY2024 board calendar. Learning topics will be developed with significant input from our new Continuing Education Coordinator and our membership team. A light meal will be included with each session as further encouragement for participants.

In addition, in concert with the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and the Illinois State Library, we propose an in-person joint board meeting with the RAILS Board of Directors at the Illinois State Library in spring 2024. We are building on history, as we held a couple of joint meetings with the RAILS Board in Springfield in the previous decade. Prior to the 2011 library systems mergers, there was a tradition of annual in-person meetings with system board presidents and system executive directors. To allow sufficient time for board member travel arrangements we will announce the meeting date this summer.

Thank you. I look forward to our conversation this evening.