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## Report for Compliance with Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act

### I. Unit of government submitting this report

Name of Library: Fondulac Public Library District (Fondulac District Library)  
Address of Main Library Office: 400 Richland Street, East Peoria, IL 61611

### II. Information about the Library

- A. The Library is located in Tazewell County.
- B. The service population of the District is 20,276 (as of 2020 census).
- C. The Library has 34 employees of the Library, including full-time, part-time, and substitute employees. The Library has 7 Trustees serving on the elected non-partisan Board.
- D. The Library's annual budget for FY2024 is \$2,131,682.10.
- E. The Library's equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for Tax Year 2022 is \$506,217,196. The Library's rate-setting equalized assessed valuation (EAV) for Tax Year 2022 is \$439,548,632.
- F. The Library building is open 69 hours per week the majority of the year (65 hours per week between Memorial Day and Labor Day). In FY2023, the Library provided 3,168 hours of in-person, on-site service. The Library's digital collections and electronic services are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

### III. Information about the Committee

#### A. Committee Members

- Library Board President Ellen Hanks (Chairperson of Committee)
- Library Board Vice President Alan Sherwood
- Library Board Treasurer Gary Grose
- Library Board Secretary Eric Swearingen
- Library Board Trustee Mary Jo Carbiener
- Library Board Trustee Marilyn Humphrey
- Library Board Trustee Megan Pulling
- Library Director Genna Buhr
- Resident Kindra Cunningham
- Resident Tamara Geier
- Resident Karen McClelland

B. Dates that the Committee met per 50 ILCS 70/20

- Meeting 1: April 24, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Fondulac District Library
- Meeting 2: August 28, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Fondulac District Library
- Meeting 3: September 25, 2023, 6:30 p.m., Fondulac District Library

**IV. Core programs or services offered by the Library**

A. The Library offers the following core services and programs:

- Collection of materials for loan and/or in-library use serving all ages
  - Regular and large-print fiction and non-fiction books
  - Downloadable eBooks, audiobooks, music, and film
  - Audiovisual materials, such as DVDs, Blu-Rays, CDs
  - Audiobooks on CD and Playaway
  - Library of Things – games, learning kits, equipment
  - Periodicals, including newspapers and magazines
  - Local history collection
  - Reference materials
- Professional information, research, reference, and referral services (in-person, by phone, by online chat, by email)
- Interlibrary loan service
- Access to subscription databases
- Public-access computers
- Printing, scanning, faxing, and photocopying
- Public wi-fi access (inside and outside building)
- Notary public service
- Educational and entertaining programs, events, and activities for all ages
- Exam proctoring
- Voter registration
- Seed library
- ExploreMore Illinois attraction pass program
- Homebound delivery service and deposit/community collections
- Maker technologies (3D printing, laser cutting)
- Tax forms
- Meeting spaces and study rooms
- Play areas
- Community outreach to events and partner organizations
- Community information and display spaces
- Library newsletter, website, and social media with library news and items of community and general interest

B. Other core services/programs the Library could possibly provide:

- The Library provides all core services assumed of a public library and as required to be reported to the Illinois State Library and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, including:
  - Visitation (a facility to house staff and collections)
  - Circulation of materials
  - Programs/events
  - Public access computer usage
  - Reference transactions and informational services from a professional staff

- The Library regularly assesses community needs and resources available in its evaluation of current and potential services.
- To be considered, library services, such as a bookmobile, and tangential services, such as passport and license plate sticker renewal, would need to be closely evaluated related to staff and financial resources available.

## **V. Intergovernmental agreements**

The Library has an intergovernmental agreement with the City of East Peoria to establish and maintain a shared use facility for the East Peoria community. The East Peoria Civic Complex includes City Hall, the Library, and shared meeting spaces, outdoor spaces, parking, and other shared infrastructure. This collaboration has saved the community tax-payer significant funds because of combined initial and ongoing construction and maintenance. East Peoria is fortunate to have a modern and well-equipped civic facility. Without the collaboration between the City of East Peoria and Fondulac Public Library District, it is questionable whether new facilities would have been constructed or been used as a catalyst for the major redevelopment of former industrial land into a bustling and successful business district (which will soon include residential components).

The Library also is a member of the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS), an Illinois intergovernmental instrumentality, and the Resource Sharing Alliance (RSA), both of which are efficient and effective resource sharing collaborations.

No one library can afford to purchase all of the materials its patrons need. RSA is a shared online catalog that allows patrons from participating libraries to search all participating library catalogs in a single search. The Library is a member of the RSA consortium, which is financially and organizationally supported by member libraries and RAILS. The Library's patrons have access to the holdings of 190+ libraries via the RSA Catalog. They can request materials to be delivered to our library via the RAILS Delivery service. RAILS delivers millions of items between Illinois libraries each year. The library mail rate for sending a single book through the United States Postal Service is approximately \$3.47 for the first pound, and an additional .66 cents for each additional pound, showing the great value RAILS delivery brings to member libraries. Our Library sends and receives approximately 26,000 items through RAILS delivery each year at no charge to our library and of approximate savings of more than \$90,000 in postage. The sharing of the items, rather than the library purchasing items it does not have or additional copies to meet patron demand or reduce patron wait time, resulted in an annual savings estimated at a minimum of \$500,000.

Similarly, through the Library's OCLC membership, patrons have access to request materials the Library or RSA members do not own from the collections of 70,000 institutions. Last year, the Library borrowed and lent more than 1,300 items via non-RSA interlibrary loan services, with those transactions being more cost-efficient than purchasing, processing, and storing the title. The sharing of the items, rather than the library purchasing items it does not have, resulted in an annual savings estimated at a minimum of \$25,000 (though likely more, as many items lent or borrowed through this method are rare and higher cost).

RAILS' eRead Illinois Axis 360 service is a cooperative program that expands access to e-books for Illinois residents. Currently, approximately 24 college and university, 284 public, 478 school, and 6 specialized libraries participate. Over 439,000 items were circulated via eRead Illinois Axis 360 in the last year. Our Library participates in eRead Illinois via our RSA membership. Similarly, central Illinois libraries have created a consortial partnership to establish the Alliance Digital Medial Library to offer additional eBooks and digital audiobooks shared amongst our cardholders. Our library's membership

cost is \$2,275. With these two services, our library patrons read more than 11,850 e-books and audiobooks in the past year, valuing at approximately \$180,000.

Through RAILS' Inkie.org program, anyone in the state can create and publish an e-book at no charge. 325 e-book projects have been created since the program began in 2019. This service is available to patrons of our Library at no additional cost to our Library.

RAILS' Explore More Illinois program allows library cardholders from across the state to reserve free and discounted admission, parking, and gift store purchases from a wide variety of Illinois cultural and recreational attractions. Currently, 422 Illinois libraries participate, and there are 66 attractions. Our Library participates in Explore More Illinois and our patrons have made 121 reservations through the program thus far.

RAILS makes it possible for staff from 3,699 libraries across a 27,000 square mile area to share ideas and possible solutions to common challenges, as well as best practices. This prevents every individual library from having to recreate "the same wheel." Our Library participates in RAILS discussion lists (from a selection of the 56 offered), including lists on a wide variety of topics and for almost every staff position at a public library. A total of approximately 76,500 messages have been exchanged via these lists since February 2012. The list for library directors is the most popular, with 40,500 messages. Likewise, staff from our Library participate in local and RAILS-based networking groups that grow collaboration and efficiency.

RAILS offers a variety of in-person and virtual continuing education (CE) workshops to help library staff and trustees keep their skills up to date and to stay on top of the different trends affecting library service. RAILS has offered over 1,004 CE events with 37,908 attendees since 2013, all of to which our staff has had free access. Many of these programs are recorded and are available for viewing via the RAILS CE Archives on the RAILS website. Staff from our library attend or view dozens of these opportunities each year.

Our Library also uses RAILS' FOIA/OMA hotline to receive free assistance from an attorney with basic questions on the Freedom of Information Act or Open Meetings Act. This saves each individual library from having to pay an attorney to answer the same basic questions. Our Library has used the FOIA/OMA hotline several times, resulting in significant savings in attorney fees which are usually \$200 per hour.

RAILS currently offers more than 50 group purchases/discounts to help libraries save money on e-resources, training, library supplies and furnishings, and more. RAILS has saved libraries over \$3.5 million since 2019. Our Library has taken advantage of at least 5 RAILS discounts in the last year alone. The Library also uses Sourcewell, a public cooperative purchasing government agency, for procurement of some items to maximize savings and reduce administrative time.

Additionally, the Library is a member of the Libraries of Illinois Risk Agency, a group insurance pool composed of member libraries. Membership allows the Library an effective way to save money in property, liability, and workers compensation insurance premiums, to have broader coverage and increased limits, to allow for more control over claims, to receive safety and compliance training, and to receive return of surplus when pool claims are low.

## **VI. Community Partnerships**

We partner with the following, non-exhaustive list of organizations to share resources (physical resources, training/education/programming, staff efforts, collaborative contributions) to better achieve

the mission of the library, to support the missions of our partners, and to achieve sharing and saving of costs.

- AARP
- All Our Kids Network
- American Library Association
- Area preschools
- Businesses in East Peoria and central Illinois
- Carle Health (Unity Point/Methodist)
- City of East Peoria, including emergency services
- CityLink (Greater Peoria Mass Transit District)
- East Peoria Chamber of Commerce
- East Peoria Community Foundation
- East Peoria Festival of Lights (FOLEPI)
- East Peoria Green Team
- East Peoria Historical Society
- East Peoria Kiwanis Club
- East Peoria Robo Raiders
- East Peoria School Districts 86 and 309
- East Peoria VFW Post #2078
- East Peoria Women's Club
- East Side Community Media
- EP!C
- Fon du Lac Park District
- Friends of Fondulac District Library
- Goodwill Industries of Central Illinois
- Hooked on Fishing
- Hoppy Haven Small Animal Rescue
- Illinois Arts Council
- Illinois Central College
- Illinois Humanities (Illinois affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities)
- Illinois Libraries Presents programming consortia
- Illinois Library Association
- Illinois Secretary of State's office
- Institute for Financial Education
- Libraries of central Illinois and statewide
- Moms Who Care
- Network of the National Library of Medicine
- OSF HealthCare
- Peoria Humane Society
- Peoria PlayHouse (Peoria Park District)
- Peoria Riverfront Museum
- Phoenix Community Development Services
- Prairie State Legal Services
- Reaching Across Illinois Library System – RAILS
- Resource Sharing Alliance NFP
- Robein School District 85
- Senior living facilities in East Peoria

- Social services in East Peoria and central Illinois
- Southern Illinois University
- STAR Net (Space Science Institute's National Center for Interactive Learning)
- Tazewell County Genealogical and Historical Society
- Tazewell County Health Department
- Tazewell County Resource Centers
- Tazewell County Sheriff's Office
- TRIAD
- YWCA Pekin Adult Literacy and Learning

## **VII. Review of laws, policies, rules and procedures, training materials, and other documents**

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Library in order to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- Serving Our Public 4.0: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries
- State laws applicable to libraries
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 *et seq.*)
- Policy on public comment
- Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- All Board members have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- Schedule of Regular Meetings of the Library Board (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*)
- Designation of FOIA Officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- FOIA Officer training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Computation and retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- Posting other required FOIA information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- List of types or categories of FOIA records under library control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- Periodic meetings to review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1 *et seq.*)
- All applicable officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5 *et seq.*)
- Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(C))
- Intergovernmental agreements
- Budget and financial documents
- Employee handbook
- State Ethics laws, including the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1 *et seq.*)
- Reports on government efficiency (*see XI*)

## **VIII. Efficiencies and accountability**

Relative to *VII. Review of laws, policies, rules and procedures, training materials, and other documents*, the Library is aware of, has reviewed, complies with, and meets the requirements of the specific items listed, including required policies, ordinances, and trainings. The Library was in compliance and met these requirements prior to the required review by the Committee.

The Library posts Board meeting agendas and minutes in accordance with law and archives both on its website. Most board meetings are video recorded and shared by East Side Community Media. Annual financial documents are made easily accessible on the Library's website. The Library receives, records, responds, and retains FOIA requests in a timely manner in compliance with the law.

Identifying ways in which the Library can respond to community needs that are in accord with the Library's mission is central to its purpose and accountability. Like school districts, which were not required to convene Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency, public libraries build and design spaces, collections, and services to meet the unique needs of the populations and communities they serve. The Library actively reviews its services to minimize duplication and maximize complementation with those of other organizations in our service area.

The Library continually evaluates its collections and services to meet the needs of its community and has introduced new collections and services on a regular basis over the past decade (most of which are listed above). The Library also strives to provide connection between patrons and organizations to meet needs outside the scope of its mission.

Public libraries, including Fondulac District Library, are some of the most efficient users of tax payer dollars. Fondulac District Library in particular has a long and successful history of interorganizational sharing. Resource sharing between libraries and other entities is innate to the Library's functionality. As demonstrated above, the Library has established formal and informal partnerships with other governments, schools, and organizations to better and more efficiently and cost-effectively serve our community and those of our partners.

The Library remains accountable to its residents through not only compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Freedom of Information Act, but through leadership from an elected Board of Trustees. The Library regularly shares information about its programs and services through a myriad of methods, both print, electronic, and in-person. The Library has established methods through which to receive public feedback (again print, electronic, and in-person).

The Library's Board of Trustees takes its fiduciary duty seriously to ensure that tax funds are levied and appropriated to support fulfillment of the library's mission and future financial obligations and stability. The Library operates under Property Tax Extension Law Limit and, to date, has not asked voters to approve increases in the extension limit or limitation or increases in tax rates. Following new facility construction in 2012-2013, the Library has utilized savings from that project and additional capital reserves to prepay principal (and its accumulated interest) of its issued construction bonds for the project. To date, the Library has prepaid more than \$1.8 million of its original and anticipated \$10.1 million payments. These prepayments will result in a final savings of more than \$1.1 million in interest and reduce the overall payment and project cost by more than 11% with the bonds paid approximately 4 years ahead of the original schedule.

The Library annually hires an external and professional service to audit its financial statements and internal controls and shares the resulting documents on its website once accepted by the Board of Trustees.

Additionally, the Library continues to designate and invest funds towards responsible levels of operational and capital reserves in order to support future financial obligations and reduce the need for potential requests for tax increases or borrowing of funds.

## **IX. Identified inefficiencies and next steps**

The Library identified insurance pool membership for employee medical, dental, vision, and life benefits as a potential avenue for savings, though consideration for claims disruption based on the current provider network should be given.

The Committee identified the required convening of the Committee, meetings, and report development and submission as a utilization of staff resources that would have better been allocated to supporting the Library's existing services and mission.

Fondulac District Library is a responsive, responsible, and fiscally stable organization that can address inefficiencies in a thoughtful and timely manner upon discovery. The Library regularly reviews library standards documents and professional guidance to ensure the best service possible with available resources and regularly reviews legislation for public library districts and local governments to ensure compliance.

## **X. Studies on governmental efficiencies**

In preparing this report, the Committee reviewed several studies on local government efficiency.

- *Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments Prepared for the Township Officials of Illinois* by Wendell Cox (2016)
- *An Inventory of Local Governments in Illinois*, a 2021 report from The Civic Federation

These studies show that the average local government in Illinois serves 1,800 residents compared to the national median of 2,850 individuals. Illinois has between 8,500 and 9,000 units of local government, of which close to 6,000 are considered special purpose governments. Illinois has the highest number of units of local government in the U.S., with Texas the only other state with more than 5,000. Illinois local government entities include public library districts, but also includes school districts, park districts, fire protection districts, airport authorities, road and bridge districts, street lighting districts, cemetery districts, and more. Public library districts, such as Fondulac Public Library District, account for 350 to 390 of the special purpose governments and less than 5% of the state's special purpose governments. Road and bridge districts account for nearly 1,400, and fire protection, drainage, and school districts each have about 850 to 900 districts.

Tazewell County has 9 public library districts, though other public libraries exist in the county that are part of another local government entity (e.g. Pekin Public Library is a municipal library as part of the City of Pekin). In total, 12 public libraries (as defined by 75 ILCS 5/, 55 ILCS 5/, and 75 ILCS 16/) are located in Tazewell County.

The Committee found some data from the Cox report irrelevant, such as the wage and salary comparisons. Wage and salary comparisons are more effective when comparing similar types of jobs rather than legal formation of the type of government.

## **XII. Committee's recommendations regarding increased accountability and efficiency**

The Committee recommends further investigation into the benefit of insurance pools related to employee insurance.

The Committee recommends continued evaluation to identify improvements to library services, accountability, and efficiency.



The Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency of Fondulac Public Library District has summarized its work and findings in the above Report for Compliance with Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act and approves its filing with the Board of Tazewell County, Illinois.

Approved: September 25, 2023

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Ellen Hanks  
Chairperson, Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency  
Fondulac Public Library District  
East Peoria, Illinois