



## **Sailor Advisory Committee**

**August 26, 2025**

**10:00 AM**

### **MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Michael C. Brown, Michael Johnson, Jason Marshall, Paula Mitchell, Susan Payne, Rudy Rodela, Tamar Sarnoff, Stephanie Sopka, Rachael Stein, Liz Sunderman-Zinger, Amanda Watson, Shane Williams *[attendees checked]*

**Call to order:** The meeting started at 10:05 am.

**Adoption of the Agenda:** There were no changes to the announced agenda.

**Approval of Minutes:** There were no corrections or additions to the draft minutes from the May 20, 2025, meeting. The minutes were adopted as drafted without objections.

#### **Discussion on Vice Chair Position:**

Rudy raised the topic of whether the committee needs a formally designated vice chair, referencing a previous occasion where such a role might have been useful.

Amanda asked Rudy about their experience as chair and whether an assistant was necessary. Jason expressed support for handling absences informally, indicating flexibility and trust in the chair's judgment.

The committee agreed that in the event the chair cannot attend, an email will be sent to the committee to request a volunteer to chair the meeting, thus opting for an ad hoc approach rather than a formal vice chair role.

#### **SLRC Oversight Commission and State Broadband Committee Succession:**

Rudy noted that Carla's term expired and that the committee needs to find a successor for her role, particularly as the representative on the State Broadband Committee.

Liz explained that the State Broadband Committee has been largely inactive, with few meetings or substantive updates in recent years.

Rudy will raise the need to nominate a successor for Carla with the State Librarian.

#### **MSLA Updates:**

Tamar provided updates on MSLA activities, including ongoing legislative efforts, Sailor's status as a major internet provider, and the uncertainty around E-rate funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, with Michael C. Brown and others clarifying the current status and implications for library systems.

**Legislative Efforts:** Tamar mentioned ongoing legislative initiatives related to SLRC and Sailor, indicating that Liz would provide more details when available.

**E-Rate Funding for Hotspots:** Tamar raised concerns about the discontinuation of E-rate funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, which Michael C. Brown clarified is still pending, with both agreeing to share further information as it becomes available.

**Federal and State Funding:** Tamar confirmed that federal funding for the current fiscal year has been received, allowing state-level operations to proceed as usual, but noted uncertainty for the following year.

**Broadband and Digital Access Initiatives:** Tamar described ongoing discussions with various agencies to explore alternative resources for broadband and digital access across the state, including meetings set up through Mako and other organizations.

### **State Library Resource Center Conference and Strategic Planning:**

**Conference Announcement:** Liz shared details about the fall conference scheduled for October 27th and 28th, emphasizing its technology focus and inviting committee members to attend.

**Keynote Speaker and Theme:** Dr. Vivian Ming will deliver the keynote on the intersection of education and the digital revolution, particularly how libraries can support education in the face of slow adaptation by public schools.

### **Sailor Network and Infrastructure Updates:**

Michael C. Brown provided updates on Sailor network projects, including fiber upgrades, construction delays, and changes in county participation, with additional context on challenges and ongoing efforts to support public schools and library systems.

**Hagerstown Fiber Project:** Michael C. Brown reported that Comcast expects to complete their own fiber installation in Hagerstown by the end of October, though permitting issues are causing delays.

**Denton Upgrade and Delays:** An upgrade in Denton to support Caroline County Public Schools is delayed until April due to construction and head end limitations, prompting exploration of alternative solutions.

**Baltimore City Infrastructure:** BG&E-related issues have impacted fiber replacement projects, with emergency reconstruction ordered at North Charles and E Pleasant streets following a previous fire, and city requirements for night work adding complexity.

**County Participation Changes:** Montgomery County will discontinue using Sailor by the end of the year due to a directive from the County Executive to consolidate all network services onto the county network.

**Support for Public Schools:** Upgrades to the Kent County connection were completed to better support local public schools, reflecting ongoing efforts to enhance educational network access.

**Marina Resource Sharing and Delivery Contracts:**

Paula updated the group on ongoing contract negotiations with Auto-Graphics for Marina resource sharing, plans for a cohort-based rollout, and developments in delivery services, including the transition to a new courier and preparations for future RFPs.

**Contract Negotiations:** Negotiations with Auto-Graphics are progressing, with a focus on ensuring contract language around privacy and user account protection aligns with library standards; Mike Brown and Shane will review the contract before finalization.

**Implementation Timeline:** The internal kickoff with Auto-Graphics is scheduled for October, with the statewide rollout planned to begin January 1, 2026, likely using a cohort approach to accommodate varying readiness among library systems.

**User Group Engagement:** Marina user groups have been informed of the ongoing negotiations, and active communication is maintained to address their questions and manage expectations regarding the rollout.

**Delivery Service Updates:** Paula reported on the transition from Hubcity to Stack Courier for delivery services, with ongoing monitoring and plans to survey users and directors ahead of future contract renewals or RFPs.

**Future Planning:** Preparations are underway to research and identify potential vendors for delivery services, ensuring readiness for contract renewal or changes as needed.

**Digital Maryland and Database Management Updates:**

Michael Johnson (SLRC) provided a comprehensive update on Digital Maryland's growth, new collections, software evaluation, collaboration with the State Archives, and ongoing database usage data challenges, including efforts to resolve statistical anomalies.

**Digital Maryland Growth:** Digital Maryland saw significant user growth from 71,000 to 145,000, added over 20,000 items in FY25, and increased page views to nearly one million, reflecting successful outreach and content expansion.

**Software Evaluation:** The team is considering alternatives to Content DM, such as AM Cortex, to improve back-end functionality and support for staff, with plans for a thorough evaluation process.

**Community Archives Collaboration:** Digital Maryland is working with the State Archives, particularly Corey Lewis, to support community archives, focusing on small institutions with limited resources, and developing a formal agreement for project outcomes.

**DPLA Hub Status:** Digital Maryland continues to serve as a DPLA hub, with content aggregated for national access, while monitoring DPLA's transition to management by the Free Library of Philadelphia and its potential impact.

Database Usage Data Issues: Ongoing challenges with database usage statistics, including unexplained spikes and inconsistencies, are being addressed through collaboration with vendors and internal analysis, with plans to annotate reports as needed.

### **Customer Service and AI Literacy Initiatives:**

Shane reported stable help desk operations and described ongoing efforts by the Pratt Center technology team to develop AI literacy resources, with plans to provide future updates on digital literacy initiatives.

Help Desk Status: Shane confirmed that customer service and help desk operations are stable, with no major updates to report.

AI Literacy Efforts: The Pratt Center technology team is actively working on AI literacy initiatives, focusing on leveraging available resources to advance digital literacy across Baltimore and beyond, with future updates planned.

### **E-Rate Funding Clarification:**

Tamar provided a follow-up on the E-rate funding discussion, confirming that while Senate approval has occurred, House approval is pending, and the consensus among state coordinators is to not rely on this funding for Wi-Fi hotspots.

Current Status: Tamar clarified that E-rate funding for Wi-Fi hotspots has passed the Senate but not the House and advised not to depend on this funding based on feedback from state coordinators and consultants.

Impact on Libraries: Tamar noted that Pratt has significant funding requests pending for hotspots, highlighting the potential financial impact if the funding does not materialize.

### **Future Meeting Dates**

<b>Sailor Advisory Committee</b>	<b>SLRC Commission</b>
<del>August 26, 2025</del>	<del>September 30, 2025</del>
November 20, 2025	December 2, 2025
February 17, 2026	March xx, 2026
May 19, 2026	June xx, 2026

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 10:44 am.