

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, May 19, 2005, in the Central Library pursuant to due notice to trustees. The following members were present:

Rebecca L. Pordum, Chair  
Phyllis A. Horton, Vice Chair  
Frank Gist, Secretary  
John B. Long, Treasurer  
Richard L. Berger  
W. Lawrence Buck  
Jack Connors  
Susan Maggiore  
Hormoz Mansouri  
Elaine M. Panty  
Abdul H. Raof  
Judith K. Summer  
Sharon A. Thomas  
Wayne D. Wisbaum

Excused:

Annette A. Juncewicz

Chair Rebecca L. Pordum called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. in the Joseph B. Rounds Conference Room.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. The agenda was approved as submitted.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of April 21, 2005 . On motion by Ms. Panty, seconded by Ms. Summer, the Minutes were approved as mailed.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Ms. Pordum stated the Library Board is working to sustain the Library System and is examining all viable options. Most recently, the Chair and Director Mahaney met with Legislator Ranzenhofer to discuss the Library's needs and, in particular, necessary funding for the materials budget. A meeting has been scheduled with Legislator Smith, who chairs the Legislature's Finance and Management Committee. A meeting with Legislator Marinelli took place in April. Library staff is currently compiling and analyzing data for all 52 branches to facilitate the Board's system-wide review.

Ms. Pordum announced the B&ECPL Executive Committee was invited to meet with the Library Foundation's Executive Committee, the intent being to keep lines of communication open. Collaboration on future projects and Library needs were discussed.

The annual artwork show for the Buffalo Public Schools is on display on the first floor of the Central Library. This popular event is hosted by the B&ECPL every year.

Trustee Wisbaum arrived at approximately 4:08 p.m.

Ms. Pordum introduced and welcomed Richard Berger, the newest member of the Library Board. He established a new business in Buffalo called NanoDynamics. Mr. Berger spoke briefly about his company and stated he is interested in helping the community. The Chair informed the Board that Trustee Jack Connors was recently honored with a Louis J. Billittier, Sr. Award by the Buffalo Niagara All-America City Committee. She also announced that Trustee Annette Juncewicz had a baby boy in early April.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Budget and Finance Committee. Dr. John Long thanked trustees for the cards and telephone calls he received during his recent convalescence. Director Michael Mahaney and CFO Kenneth Stone kept him informed on library business matters. He asked Deputy Director Kenneth Stone to brief trustees on the next agenda item.

Agenda Item E.1.a – 2005 Budget Adjustments: Allocating 2004 Year-end Balance and Approving Annual State Report. Mr. Stone stated this resolution deals with allocation of 2004 year-end fund balances. He explained budget items that required adjustments in 2004 and anticipated changes for 2005, including pension system charges. This resolution also approves submission of the Annual State Report, which was made available to trustees for inspection. Ms. Horton moved for approval. Dr. Raouf seconded, and approval was unanimous.

#### RESOLUTION 2005-23

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting of December 16, 2004, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library approved Resolution 2004-49, adopting the Library's 2005 budget, and

WHEREAS, subsequent to adopting the 2005 budget two member-aid funded 2004 activities not completed or implemented in 2004 are identified for completion or implementation in 2005, and

WHEREAS, additional adjustments to the 2005 budget are needed to meet higher than anticipated expenses, and

WHEREAS, no changes are recommended to the Library's "Designated for Contingency" and "Designated for Improvements and Long-term Replacements" accounts, and

WHEREAS, sufficient 2004 ending fund balance is available to meet these objectives, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library amends the 2005 Operating Budget revenue and expenditures by \$580,135, as shown on the attached Exhibit One, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library certifies that the Library System operated under its approved plan of service in accordance with the provisions of Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees approves submitting to the New York State Department of Education the Annual Report of the System's activities and financial results for 2004.

Agenda Item E.1.b – Monthly Financial Report for April. A financial report for the period ending 4/30/2005 was distributed to trustees. Mr. Stone reported the Library's operating budget is in good shape. The library materials budget must be funded from bonds this year. It is possible the bonds may be issued in June. He told Board members the ability to process payments to vendors has been seriously affected due to staff reductions in the Comptroller's Office.

Ms. Panty asked whether delayed payments could affect the Library's relationship with its vendors. Mr. Stone said the Library works closely with vendors in an attempt to mitigate problems. Extremely sensitive invoices are being identified by Library staff to accelerate processing by the County. Contracts are in place to complete Phase I of the renovation project. Beyond that, renovations will be on hold until the budget situation is resolved. He could not estimate when future phases may be put out to bid, although the work can't be put off indefinitely because the County is required to abate asbestos in all County facilities, including the Central Library.

Mr. Connors asked what the impact might be on the operating budget if bonds are not issued for library materials. Mr. Mahaney replied variable factors are involved. This is an issue the Board may have to address in the near future. To suggest the order of magnitude, Library administration indicated to the County and Legislature that it could stretch \$5 million through the remainder of 2005 and all of 2006. For the Library to subsist and provide a basic amount of material to Erie County residents through the balance of this year, approximately \$1.5 to \$2 million is needed. Many subscriptions are coming due in mid-year, some are on hold and others have already been canceled.

Mr. Connors inquired whether there is a chance for further reductions in funding this year, even with the Library Protection Act in place, given the County's current financial situation. From a legal standpoint, the Director believes the operating budget is secure. The \$21.7 million in property tax appropriated for the Library should legitimately be available to the Library. However, due to the County's current cash flow problems, difficulties might arise.

At Dr. Long's suggestion, Mr. Mahaney explained that before 2000 the materials budget was always included as part of the Library's operating budget. When the present County

administration reduced property taxes, library materials budgets for 2001 and 2002 were allocated from tobacco funds. In 2003, a portion of this budget was shifted from tobacco funds to general obligation bonds. In 2004, the entire materials budget, with the exception of \$200,000, was funded by bonds. Each year during the Library's budget hearings this issue arose. Library officials encouraged the County to shift the materials budget back to the operating budget. Ultimately, it was the County's decision as to how it chose to fund the Library System.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Michael Mahaney welcomed Mr. Berger to the Board. He asked Buffalo Library Services Committee members to assemble after the Board meeting to select a new date in June for the upcoming public hearing on library services.

In addition to the materials budget, which is of foremost concern, \$600,000 is also required from the County for support of the Merriweather project. The City is funding construction of the new building, and the County's role is to assist with furnishing, equipment and materials at the new library. This has been a standard practice.

Many people are concerned about materials for library patrons. While the B&ECPL has a tremendous collection —well over three million items, the foremost request is to provide the newest materials, print or non-print, as quickly as possible. The B&ECPL has been very successful at this for many years. A significant portion of circulation is from new items. Staff continues to examine requests and has reduced purchases. The bottom line is also affected because without new materials the Library is losing revenue from overdue fines.

The following was submitted by the Director and transmitted to Board members prior to the meeting.

**Legislators Begin Review of 2005 Capital Budget:** On April 27 th , the Director and Chief Financial Officer **Kenneth Stone** appeared before the Erie County Legislature's Finance and Management Committee to defend and prioritize B&ECPL requests for funds to support capital projects. Over the past few years, the B&ECPL materials budget has been separated from the B&ECPL operating budget and placed in Erie County 's capital budget. With few exceptions, the money the Library uses to purchase new books, magazines, DVDs and CDs has come from (a) the County's share of the 1998 tobacco settlement between the states and cigarette manufacturers and/or (b) bonded (i.e., borrowed) capital funds. This year, in the wake of Erie County 's ever-unfolding budget crisis, the Legislature has delayed any discussion of the 2005 capital budget until very recently. Efforts to stretch the Library's unexpended 2004 balances to purchase a modest amount of new material in 2005 are drawing to an end. Without an infusion of new capital funds, the Library will be compelled to absorb all or part of the materials appropriation from the 2005 operating budget, forcing additional service cuts, more layoffs, possibly even closing some libraries before the end of 2005. Legislators listened attentively to the staff's presentation and asked how and where the Library might control costs and stretch dollars even farther. In the end, the Library emphasized the necessity of bonding \$5 million for library materials as soon as possible ? assuring Legislators that the

Library would stretch those dollars beyond 2005 into 2006. The Library's second priority is for funds to purchase furnishings and equipment for the new Merriweather Library, which is scheduled to open this fall. Given current economic conditions, all other capital projects, including renovations/ improvements at Central and new library construction, were assigned much lower priority. This effectively reduced the B&ECPL's 2005 capital request from \$14.4 million to \$5.6 million. The Committee's response to the presentation can be described as respectful, receptive and cautiously optimistic. Action by the full Legislature is required next.

**Youth Services Specialists Gather for Annual Meeting:** On April 27<sup>th</sup>, Children's Department Manager **Beverly Federspiel** welcomed youth services librarians from across the System for a session focusing on the summer reading program and this year's theme, "Tune in @ Your Library." **Nels Cremean** of *InJest* presented "Stress and Humor in the Workplace," explaining the philosophy and science of humor and its importance at work and in our everyday lives. Children's Department librarians **Kerra Alessi, Nicole Bermingham, Sandra Blackman** and **Alicia DiFranco** presented programming ideas that supported this year's theme. A table talk craft session ended the program. Feedback was positive on all elements of the meeting.

**B&ECPL Patent Service Upgraded :** Fresh from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office annual training seminar, librarian **Dan Caufield** (Business, Science and Technology Department) shared many new developments with his colleagues. Among the highlights was the fact that each depository library will be able to offer patrons the exact information in the same format previously available only in the Patent Search Room at the Patent and Trademark Headquarters in Alexandria , Virginia . Seminar participants received extensive training in the online database *PUBWEST* that is now available in BS&T. Instead of an expensive and time consuming trip to the Washington , D.C. area, local patent attorneys and inventors need travel only as far as the Central Library on Lafayette Square in downtown Buffalo .

**Sirsi Representatives Visit B&ECPL:** On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Sirsi Corporation's Vice President of Sales **Marsha Stark** paid the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library a visit. After a tour of the Central Library Phase I renovation, Ms. Stark met with key members of the Library's management team to discuss ways in which Sirsi can assist the B&ECPL in reducing costs and increasing revenues. The previous day, **Laurie Chase**, B&ECPL's Sirsi Customer Account Manager, and representatives from Envisionware presented products that can streamline the administration of patrons' use of public access computers. These printer cost recovery and self-authentication tools could decrease the amount of time required by staff for these routine, time-consuming tasks. Network Support will continue to evaluate this software and other similar programs.

**B&ECPL Patrons Volunteer to Participate in Focus Group:** On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Sirsi consultants visited the Central Library to conduct a focus group session with eighteen B&ECPL patrons. Findings of the local focus group, as well as those conducted in Bergen County , New Jersey , suburban New England , Hamilton , Ontario and Cleveland , Ohio , will be presented to Library management at the completion of the study.

**Sirsi Delivers New Program to Warn Patrons of Pending Collection Agency Action:** Currently, the B&ECPL provides patrons with notices of seriously overdue materials and bills for materials that are considered “lost.” If, however, a patron returns a number of items with high fines but not late enough to trigger an overdue notice and incurs total fines of more than \$49.99, he or she might be in a position to be referred to the Library's collection agency without ever receiving written notification. To avoid this possibility, the B&ECPL directed Sirsi to develop a new “fines only” notice. It was thoroughly tested and implemented in late April, closing a loophole and allowing a return to routine collection agency referrals.

**B&ECPL Cracks Down on Book Theft:** A *Buffalo News* article published on April 24<sup>th</sup> recounts the misdeeds of a Buffalo-area woman who pleaded guilty to borrowing, then selling, more than 100 medical books from the Central Library, University at Buffalo and Erie Community College . The B&ECPL received credit for tipping off authorities. Former B&ECPL administrator **Lucille DeFranks** deserves thanks for uncovering the caper and bringing it to the attention of **Candace Vogel** of the Erie County District Attorney's Office who pursued the matter, which will result in more than \$8,000 in restitution to the Library.

**Barnes and Noble Supports Children's Programs:** Thanks to the efforts of Library Foundation Executive Director **Anne Leary** , Barnes and Noble Booksellers will sponsor several programs for the B&ECPL over the next few months. The first was held on April 8<sup>th</sup> at the North Park Branch and featured **Spot the Dog** (Yes, the 6-foot red canine of picture book fame!) who hugged and “high-fived” 25 delighted kindergarten children from Buffalo Public School #64. A professional children's entertainer also presented stories and songs.

**“ Literally Speaking” Returns to West Room :** On April 19<sup>th</sup> , the Central Library's lunchtime book discussion group gathered in the recently re-opened West Room to enjoy delicious lunches from *Fables* café as well as a lively discussion of *The Ghost Writer*, a multi-layered gothic suspense novel by **John Harwood** . Central Librarian **Kathy Galvin** led the discussion.

**Staff Training Yields Positive Results:** Refresher sessions offered this spring to staff in contract libraries and branches on the new Sirsi automation system represented a worthwhile and successful collaboration between Central Public and Support Services librarians: **Melissa Casolini Dal Bo, Dan Caufield, Mary Ann Ozimek, Angela Pierpaoli, Carol Pijacki, Samantha Purpora, Cynthia Van Ness, Maureen McLaughlin, Jennifer Trigilio, Lizabeth Weig** and **Jennifer Shine**. As a result, staff System-wide reported a greater skill and comfort level with the technology. Reference database trainings were also emphasized throughout April and May. EBSCO company representative **Duncan Smith** (who also happens to be a librarian) traveled to B&ECPL to present two all-day sessions on *Novelist* (a fiction database that includes more than 120,000 titles useful for readers advisory) and other EBSCO products that enhance every library's reference capabilities. Niagara Library Branch manager **Cathy Foertch** put her EBSCO training to immediate use last week. Using the EBSCO *Masterfile Premier* , she was able to assist a Spanish-speaking customer searching for instructions on making a

chemical volcano. After finding the information, she used the “translate” function to print out the information in Spanish for the very grateful patron.

**Display Highlights Shakespeare Collection:** Grosvenor Room librarian **Rob Alessi** has mounted an impressive William Shakespeare display, featuring prints, books, plates and other memorabilia from the **Dr. J. Warren Perry** Collection. Recently, Dr. Perry donated more than 160 Shakespeare-related items from his personal collection to the Central Library's Grosvenor Rare Book Room. This collection includes 23 **Felix Darley** prints from the 1884-1885 *Darley Gallery of Shakespearean Illustrations*, hand-colored and signed by Darley. Only three sets of this type are known to exist. Also of particular interest are three-dimensional pieces, e.g., a bronze sculpture on a marble base by **Emile Guillemin**, entitled “William Shakespeare Sitting,” and an 1882 plaster statue by John Rogers of four characters from *Othello*.

“Why Guy” Visits Central: WIVB-TV's “Why Guy,” Kevin O'Neil, showcased the Central Library's renovated spaces during his segments on Channel 4's April 26<sup>th</sup> morning show. Chief Operating Officer Ruth Collins took O'Neil for an “on air” tour while she explained the asbestos abatement project, the enhanced service aspects of the renovation, and the revenue-generating opportunities that the changes represent. *Fables* café operator Jason Davidson described several menu items and outlined his credentials as a restaurateur, including his current association with the Mansion on Delaware Avenue. (As an important aside, *Fables* received a rating of 3 ½ out of 4 by *Buffalo News* food critic Anne Neville in her April 22<sup>nd</sup> *Gusto* column, calling *Fables* “an innovative eatery.”) Beverly Federspiel, full-time Children's Department Manager and part-time store manager, described the great used book values available in *Encore Editions* as well as *Novel Ideas'* book-theme related gift items.

**Miscellaneous Meetings and Appearances:** On April 12<sup>th</sup>, COO **Ruth Collins**, Process Improvement Project (PIP) Coordinator **Doreen Woods** and Central Library Administrator **Peggy Skotnicki** met with **W. David Penniman**, Dean of the School of Informatics, to present an overview of PIP progress to date. The Dean is interested in collaborating on later phases of the project and using the overall concept as a teaching tool. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Director appeared before the Legislation Committee of the Buffalo Common Council to discuss library service in the City of Buffalo. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, the Director was a guest on Adelphia TV's *Crossroads* program, discussing a wide range of subjects, including Central Library renovations and future directions for the B&ECPL. On April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Director met with **Drew Cerza**, a volunteer working with the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Erie County Stabilization Project, to explore solutions to Erie County's ongoing budget woes. A follow-up meeting with other Partnership volunteers is planned. On April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Director addressed the New York State Association of Library Board's annual Trustee Institute in Syracuse. The topic of the presentation was “Being Politically Savvy.” On May 5<sup>th</sup>, COO **Ruth Collins** met with the Board of the Association of Contracting Library Boards of Trustees (ACT) to discuss agendas for future meetings.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation Director. Executive Director Anne Leary was unable to attend the meeting; however, she prepared a written report that was distributed

to trustees. It gave information on a spring direct mail campaign, Barnes and Noble partnership, *Harry Potter* books, *The Map that Changed the World* event and a book campaign in conjunction with the *Buffalo News* .

Agenda Item H – Public Comment. John Klukowski, Sr. of 189 Cazenovia Street would prefer to retain all 52 branches with reduced services rather than close buildings. Compared to school budgets, the Library's budget is a “drop in the bucket” and it benefits the entire County. The B&ECPL System is one of the best examples of regionalism in Erie County .

Jeffrey Gauthier attends St. Bonaventure Elementary School. He complained about the loss of service hours at many library branches and he opposes coffee shops in libraries.

Valerie Niederhoffer of Buffalo opposes consolidation of libraries. Libraries in schools are not a viable option due to safety concerns for pupils. They could not be open in the daytime when schools are in session. Libraries are important to neighborhoods.

ElizaBeth Berry of the Save Our Libraries Coalition believes future library closings will be blamed on the County budget crisis. She feels that keeping libraries in walkable neighborhoods should be a priority. She urged trustees to re-think capital construction spending and to be inventive in attempting to raise new revenue streams.

Agenda Item I – Unfinished Business. No unfinished business.

Agenda Item J – New Business. No new business.

Agenda Item K – Adjournment. Prior to adjournment, the Chair informed new members of the Board that a videotape made a few years ago called, *Breaking New Ground, Strengthening a Community* , is available for loan if anyone would like to view it. It illustrates how a new library can change the community and features some amenities that might be offered in a new, larger facility.

Ms. Summer thanked library staff, particularly Mr. Mahaney, Mr. Stone and Ms. Collins, for their continued efforts on behalf of the Library System.

There being no further business, on motion by Ms. Horton with a second by Mr. Wisbaum, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Gist

Secretary