



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPDATE: BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

The following is a summary of the monthly meeting of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System Board of Trustees held on Thursday, December 16 in the downtown Central Library in Lafayette Square.

Trustees passed a budget for 2011 that restores open hours to at least state minimum standards for all of our 37- County libraries. The vote was based on receiving \$3 million of restored county funds. That scenario is estimated to save 65-70 full time equivalent positions out of the over 100 FTE positions that would have been eliminated without the \$3 million funding. Trustees were given two options to consider. One, based on receiving the anticipated funds and the other, a more austere plan, based on not receiving the funds.

Because the Library's estimated 2011 recurring funding gap was nearly \$7 million, even with the restored funding the Library System will still undergo downsizing layoffs and most likely use its entire undesignated fund balance in 2011 for transitional expenses including for layoff related costs and unemployment compensation.

Trustees were told of reductions in all budgets including library materials. "When the economy is down, library usage is up," said Kenneth Stone, chief financial officer. "This is the time we need to remain open. Now more than ever, people are using libraries for things like employment searches as evidenced by the number of patrons visiting libraries annually." In 2010 library visits are projected to rise 12%, circulation 12%, and public access computer use 92% across the System vs. 2007 pre-recessionary levels.

The community was again acknowledged for its support during these challenging times. Library Trustees agreed that they must continue to aggressively identify new revenue sources because government funding remains bleak. Results of the Library System's yearend appeal are encouraging with over \$22,000 donated in a week's time.

The Planning Committee is moving forward on development of a voter-directed Special Library District model which removes Library funding from the County's property tax levy, and puts the approval of a funding allocation in the hands of the public. Draft legislation is expected by mid- 2012.

Trustees passed a resolution to extend contracts with the 22 contracting member libraries - those outside the City of Buffalo.

Trustees were introduced to new board member, Amy Alvarez-Perez.

John Davis, chief of staff for the Erie County Legislature, updated the board on the Legislature's meeting which was held earlier in the day. He asked the Trustees to attend the County's Community Enrichment Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, December 20 at 11 a.m. to discuss the \$3 million single year, stimulus money announced by the Republican Caucus and endorsed by the County Executive earlier this week. The full legislature will then meet on Thursday, December 23 at 2:00p.m. to vote on the allocation. Both meetings will be held in County Hall at 82 Franklin Street.

The next meeting of the Buffalo and Erie County Board of Trustees is Thursday, January 20, 2011 at 4:00p.m. in the downtown, Central Library's Board Room. Meeting dates and times can be found on the Library System website at www.buffalolib.org. Unless otherwise noted Meetings are held on the **third Thursday** of every month.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System serves more than 4 million users annually. In 2009, more than 8 million items were borrowed by library patrons. The Board of Trustees are unpaid, political appointees as dictated by New York State law.

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