

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
November 21, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at the Central Library and remotely pursuant to due notice to trustees. The following members were present:

Kimberly Johnson, Chair
Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq., Treasurer
Joel Moore, Esq., Secretary
Michael Amodeo, Esq.
Nathaniel W. Barnes
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Lucy Candelario*
John D. Craik, Esq.
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.
Elaine Panty
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq.

*Trustee Candelario attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances; pursuant to the B&ECPL Procedures for Trustee Videoconferencing, she was a full participant.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum was present.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. None.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of October 17, 2024. Trustee Bucki noticed a couple grammatical errors in the Executive Committee report. Trustee Craik motioned for approval of the Minutes as amended. Trustee Sasiadek seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Trustee Moore arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair Johnson shared that she attended the *BABEL: Tommy Orange* event at Kleinhans Music Hall. She briefly described her experience and stated that Tommy Orange explained Native American representation

in literature, movies, and television in a way that was enlightening. Next, Chair Johnson made known that the Visioning Process Ad Hoc Committee met with Mary Beth Debus from Program Savvy Consulting, LLC. She stated that Mary Beth Debus will work with the Committee to create surveys and focus groups to gather information on how Library constituents view B&ECPL. Trustee Craik added that Mary Beth Debus will also reach out to select stakeholders and elected officials that support the Library.

Following that, Chair Johnson shared that she attended the budget hearing on Wednesday, November 13. She stated that it went well and Legislator John Bargnesi shared his sentiments about the Central Library and how he feels positive about going to the library now.

Finally, Chair Johnson remind the Board that the Trustee Education Requirements needs to be completed before the end of the year, as well as the Sexual Harassment Prevention Training. She shared that if any Board members attended the ACT meetings that will count toward Trustee training. She also wanted to emphasize the importance of full compliance in annual donations from the Board.

Trustee Barnes arrived at 4:08 p.m.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met on November 14, 2024. A copy of the written report was included in the Board packet. Trustee El-Behairy briefly summarized the meeting. Trustee Panty moved to have the written report entered into the Minutes, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Present: Executive Committee Chair Kimberly Johnson, Vice Chair Carima El-Behairy, and members *Lucy Candelario, Elaine Panty and Christopher Sasiadek. Also present were Director John Spears, and Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich

*Trustee Candelario attended the meeting remotely due to an extraordinary circumstance and was considered a full participant.

Trustee Candelario arrived virtually at 4:10 p.m.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:03 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair Johnson began the meeting by asking if there will be any changes to the agenda. Director Spears proposed adding an Executive Session to the agenda under Agenda Item K – New Business. The Executive Committee was agreeable to adding it to the agenda. The purpose of the Executive Session will be to make a recommendation for the Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer position.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair Johnson will be speaking about her experience at the *BABEL Literary Series* held at Kleinhans Music Hall. She shared that author Tommy Orange was exceptional and showed Native American representation. Next, Chair Johnson stated that she will be sharing information about her and the Visioning Process Ad Hoc Committee meeting with Mary Beth Debus of Program Savvy Consulting, LLC.

Following that, Chair Johnson explained that she attended the budget hearing on Wednesday, November 13. She stated that it went well and Legislator John Bargnesi shared his sentiments about the Central Library and how he feels positive about going to the library now. Chair Johnson stated that she encouraged the Erie County Legislature to support the proposed budget. Discussion ensued regarding the budget hearing.

Finally, Chair Johnson emphasized the importance of the Board donating to the Library.

Next, Director Spears explained the proposed Resolution 2024-26 - Budget NY State Library Construction Aid Award. He stated that this proposed resolution will share the updated numbers for New York State Construction Aid that the Library received. Following that, Director Spears briefly explained the how the Library is doing financially for the month ending September 30. Discussion ensued regarding sales tax revenue and how that impacts the Library.

Further discussion ensued regarding the budget and the budget moving forward for subsequent years.

For the Report of the Director, Director Spears shared that he will discuss looking at financials for 2026 and stated that it is never too early to begin those discussions. Next, he stated that he will discuss the hiring process for the Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer which will continue during Executive Session under Agenda Item K - New Business. Discussion ensued regarding how many applicants there were for the Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer position and assistance from Lisa of TripleTrack HR. The final candidate interview will be held on Wednesday, November 20 at 3:30 p.m. the other two were held earlier in the afternoon of Thursday, November 14. Trustee Christine Bartholomew and Trustee Panty were in attendance for those interviews. Discussion ensued among members about the final Library Director interviews and Director Spears experience during that time.

Chair Johnson continued going through the proposed agenda. Trustee El-Behairy stated that there will be a Report of the Foundation. Discussion ensued regarding member library visitations and the Angola Public Library Harvest Dinner held on Saturday, October 16.

Finally, Director Spears mentioned that he will work on creating a survey of availability for a Trustee Orientation. Discussion ensued regarding Trustee training

and previous orientations. Assistant to the Director Goodrich said that she will send out information about the Trustee Handbook Book Club.

There being no further business, Trustee Panty motioned to adjourn, and Trustee El-Beahry seconded. The meeting ended at 4:29 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Resolution 2024-26 – Budget NY State Library Construction Aid Award. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik explained proposed Resolution 2024-26 as presented below. She stated that this proposed resolution’s purpose is to accept the increase of the original estimates that were adopted in September 2023. Trustee Kelly asked for clarification on the purpose of a mixing box. ADD-Controller Patronik explained that they are a part of the HVAC system. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed resolution.

RESOLUTION 2024-26

WHEREAS, on September 21, 2023 the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library adopted Resolutions 2023-32, 2023-33, and 2023-34 authorizing the Library Director to submit a \$34,000,000 NYS Public Library Construction Aid Program funding recommendation in the total amount of \$831,548 for Central Library and East Clinton Branch Library Projects..

WHEREAS, this aid provides an opportunity to leverage local funds to increase the amount available to finance badly-needed capital rehabilitation and improvement projects, and

WHEREAS, during the aid review process the NY State Library Division of Library Development staff advised that the Central Library project was expected to receive additional funding resulting from its location in an economically disadvantaged area, and

WHEREAS, on October 1, 2024 the Library received aid award notices for the Central Library and East Clinton Branch Library Projects in the total amount of \$923,999, which is a \$92,451 increase over the original estimates, and

WHEREAS, a Library Grants budget needs to be established to utilize this funding, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL approves establishing a Grant Budget as follows:

Central Library Mixing Box Replacement, Teen/Children’s Reconfiguration & Marble Column Rehabilitation Project

NYS Library Construction Aid Revenue	\$577,207
Project Expense:	\$577,207

East Clinton Branch Library Roof Replacement and Building Improvements

NYS Library Construction Aid Revenue	\$346,792
Project Expense:	\$346,792

Trustee Craik motioned for approval of Resolution 2024-26, Trustee El-Behairy seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item E.2.b – Monthly Financial Report. ADD-Controller Patronik informed the Board that Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz released the 2025 Proposed Budget on Tuesday, October 15. The Library saw a 4.3% increase in funding. ADD-Controller Patronik stated that the budget documents are now uploaded onto the Library’s website. She went on to inform the Board that they should hear back on the adopted budget in mid-December. For the Monthly Financial Report ending on September 30, the financials are in good standing.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Director Spears began his report by informing the Board that the Teen Space and the Children’s Room at the Central Library had their glass doors installed. This will make for easier access to the Teen Space area. Next, Director Spears commended ADD-Controller Patronik and Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki on their diligent work with the Library budget. He went on to express gratitude to County Executive Mark Poloncarz and the Erie County Legislature regarding the proposed budget.

Following that, Director Spears shared that he attended the *NYLA Annual Conference* held in Syracuse, New York. He stated that the Library was well represented and had approximately 12 employees in attendance. Since the conference was held the day after the presidential election, topics that were discussed involved expectations of what will happen to libraries in the incoming administration. There are several programs that are administered federally that libraries depend on. Discussion ensued on what these programs are, such as e-rate. Further discussion ensued regarding the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Trustee Bucki congratulated Director Spears on receiving the Mary Bobinski Innovative Public Library Director Award during the *NYLA Annual Conference*. Discussion ensued regarding the award ceremony.

Lastly, Director Spears shared that information will be going out to the Board members regarding Trustee Orientation. He stated that this would count for the Trustee Education Requirement. Discussion ensued regarding the Trustee Orientation.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
October 2024**

Central Library 60th Birthday Celebration - Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** presented on the story of the building of the Central Library at the *Happy 60th Birthday, Central Library!* celebration on October 18. Central Adult Services Librarian **Rosalyn Damico** came up with the idea for this celebration, hosted by Director **John Spears**. It included remarks from Kideney Architects, the firm that designed the building; an exhibit of items from the original Dedication Day of the Library in October 1964, curated by Rare Book and Map Librarian **Charles Alaimo**; a video from former Library Page and Chair of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Board of Trustees, Judge Salvatore Martoche; and cake! Truly a collaborative effort, the Library's Development & Communications and Graphics departments planned the agenda, designed the logo, flyers, and sent invitations to former directors.

Creative Small Business Symposium - The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library in partnership with the Western New York Library Resources Council presented the *Creative Small Business Symposium* held at the Central Library on October 28. Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy**, System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal**, and Cheektowaga Public Library Director **Daniel (Dan) Caufield** attended the all-day event. In addition, **Dan, Carol**, and TechKnow Lab Librarian **Jacqueline (Jackie) Hovey** presented on *Developing a Business Plan*, *Intellectual Property*, and *Canva for Small Business*, respectively. Participants were also able to take a tour of the Launch Pad MakerSpace at the Central Library during their lunch. The Law Offices of Stephanie Adams, PLLC and M&T Bank sponsored the event.

Intersect Unconference 2024 - Innovate or Stagnate: Embracing Necessary Changes in Library Practices - The Central Library hosted the Western New York Library Resources Council Continuing Education Committee's annual *Intersect Unconference 2024 - Innovate or Stagnate: Embracing Necessary Changes in Library Practices* on October 11. The event featured 10 presentations throughout the day on various topics in public and academic librarianship, including *Niche is the Word: Get Genealogists Grooving in Your Computer Labs* presented by Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** and *AI Basics* presented by **Jacqueline Hovey**. Over 50 academic and public librarians attended.

East Clinton Branch Library @ Kaisertown Beggars Night - East Clinton Branch Library tabled outside of the library during Trick or Treating on Kaisertown's Beggars night. Staff passed out glow sticks, Library pencils and stickers, Library information, and other treats! Staff was so excited to welcome 2,255 Kaisertown neighbors to the branch!

Preservation in Action 2024: "Women in the Field" - **Rhonda Hoffman** took part in the *Preservation in Action 2024: "Women in the Field"* virtual panel discussion hosted by the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society on October 9. **Rhonda** was an

honoree this year for her contributions to the body of knowledge and preservation of family history.

Central hosted a free community program called “Experience Buffalove” on October 23, during the **National Association of Black Storytellers Conference** held for the first time in Buffalo. The program, planned by retired B&ECPL Librarian Sharon Holley, showcased local Black culture through performances by songstress Drea D’Nur, African American Cultural Center dancers & drummers, Buffalo’s Poet Laureate Aitina Fareed-Cooke, the Muhammad School of Music, and several young Storytellers of Tomorrow. Every seat in the Auditorium was filled, with attendees ranging from local residents to many conference participants from across the U.S.

The **IMAGINE Buffalo** live Zoom program on October 22 featured former U.S. Congressman Brian Higgins who spoke about civic engagement. The special show also featured a lead actor from the *Hamilton* musical showing at Shea’s Performing Arts Center. IMAGINE Buffalo, a weekly library program, has been running for 15 years. It is produced by the Development & Communications department and hosted by volunteer Dennis Galucki, in partnership with the Center for the Study of Art, Architecture, History & Nature (C-SAAHN).

1. Public Services

Central Library:

October 5 - Adult Services Librarian **Leslie Carr** conducted a library tour for participants of the NYS Migrant Workers Education Program. Following the tour, the students in the program got to see their photographic exhibit on display in the gallery space on the second floor. Cas Rodriguez of the Hispanic Heritage Council was present to talk about the Council and share experiences with the students, who are from different Hispanic communities. There were about 20 students plus some of their families present.

October 5 - Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** hosted a system-wide public screening event of *Los Hermanos/The Brothers* (2020) from a new vendor, GOOD DOCS, via Zoom, with the support of **Carol Kowalik-Happy**. Anna Reinstein Library and Newstead Library also participated in this Hispanic Heritage Month program along with four on-site viewers at the Central Library.

October 11 - Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** hosted a letterpress printmaking workshop for 12 visiting library professionals as part of WNYLRC’s 2024 Intersect Unconference.

October 19 - Technology Clerk **Amanda Brown** produced and conducted a tassel ghost-making craft with a custom-designed laser cut template and instructions as part of the library’s annual Spooky Library Party with 54 participants.

October 24 - **Leslie Carr** hosted the library's second Bad Art Night. Everyone enjoyed making some really bad-and good-art and are bringing more friends for the next round in December. Local art studios and theaters have been engaged and are interested in attending also. There were six people present.

System Services:

Author Visit - Jacob Rachwal worked with Frank Cammarata, Director of Erie County's Office for People with Disabilities, to host a visit with local children's book author Engelic Everett at the Central Library on October 4. Engelic provided a book talk and reading of her new book, *Olivia and The Flying Meatballs*. She also donated two copies of the book that will be added to the collection at the Central Library.

Community Resource Fair - Jacob Rachwal coordinated with Peaceprints of WNY to hold their first ever *Community Resource Fair* at the Central Library on October 23. Forty participating local providers shared information about resources on housing, workforce training, mental health services, recovery services, legal services, and much more with over 300 people in attendance.

Genealogy Training and Events - Susan Buttaccio hosted Mike McBride in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on October 12 for a presentation titled *Exile McBride: Buffalo's Forgotten Irish Freedom Fighter*. McBride discussed his ancestor, a Buffalo resident that worked tirelessly for Home Rule in Ireland (Irish independence). **Rhonda Hoffman** presented *Bring Your Ancestors' Neighborhoods to Life with Google Earth Pro* to ProGen Study Groups on October 20, *All About FamilySearch* at the Town of Tonawanda Senior Center on October 22, *My House is Giving Me a Vibe* at the Hamburg Public Library on October 24, and *My House is Giving Me a Vibe* to 20 participants at the Lancaster Public Library on October 29.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month - In honor of *National Disability Employment Awareness Month*, **Jacob Rachwal** worked with Frank Cammarata to bring in 11 local agencies for tabling at the Central Library throughout the month. **Jacob** and Frank also worked with ACCESS-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) to provide the *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Career Fair* on October 24 at the Central Library. Representatives from 40 businesses and organizations shared their resources with over 200 people in attendance.

Oral History Workshops - Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** and Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** presented introductory *Oral History Workshops* in the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library on October 12 and October 24. Attendees learned about the basics of oral history and how the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library can assist them with oral history projects, including a basic tutorial on the use of the Grosvenor Room's Oral History kits.

Reading Club - On October 31, Special Collections Librarian **Elizabeth (Libby) Stengel** held the first meeting of *Paging through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*, a history-themed book club.

Teal Pumpkin Project - System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** and System Youth Outreach Services Librarian Trainee **Amealia Brousseau** coordinated the Library System's participation in FARE's (Food Allergy Research & Education) *Teal Pumpkin Project*. The project is a worldwide movement to make Halloween safer and inclusive for children with food allergies. The 26 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries that participated in the project received Teal Pumpkin pails. Toys were offered as an option and no items containing popular allergens were put in the pail. In addition, libraries created a social media post and displayed signage from the Teal Pumpkin Project website in their libraries.

Technology Training - In addition to providing technology training throughout the month at several libraries, TechKnow Lab staff provided technology classes at the Central Library and continued to provide one-on-one technology assistance at the *Tech Help Desk* near the computer area at the Central Library twice a week. TechKnow Lab Librarian **Brendan Chella** and TechKnow Lab Library Assistant **Isabell Berger** taught a *Computer Basics* and *Microsoft Office* class for a group from Mental Health Peer Connection on October 2. **Brendan** also provided a class on *Gmail*. In addition, technology classes taught by **Jacqueline Hovey** on *Using Google, Google Drive, Google Maps* and *Google Photos* were provided in the TechKnow Lab throughout the month.

Signage - The Graphics Department, under Manager **Dawn Stanton**, produced signage for libraries including KNM, GRI, WSE, LNC, ANG, HAM, PAN, OPK, NPK, and MRW. Graphics also worked with the League of Women voters to create a display at the Central Library about Election Day.

Tours and Visits:

Members of the Rochester Genealogical Society visited the Grosvenor Room on October 26. **Rhonda Hoffman** provided them with a tour of the room and they researched for the rest of the day.

Buffalo Branches:

Crane Programming Highlights:

- Crane Branch Library hosted four story times in October with a total of 106 patrons attending.
- Staff hosted a weekly and on-demand LEGO Club with 17 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch hosted a Button Making event on October 16 with 15 patrons participating.
- Crane Branch orchestrated an October Scavenger Hunt in which patrons found nine images hidden throughout the children's section and then picked a prize, with 253 patrons participating.
- Crane Branch hosts a Chess Club for kids on Saturday mornings with 20 patrons attending.

- Crane Branch hosts a Nintendo Switch gaming program on Thursday afternoons with 18 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch hosted a Matinee Movie on October 14 with 4 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch participated in Elmwood Village Association's "Safe Trick-or-Treat" Event on October 27, with 50 patrons stopping for candy at the table in front of the library.
- Crane Branch hosted a kids Halloween party on October 28 with 77 attending.

Dudley Programming Highlights:

- Dudley Branch Library hosted Family Story time twice, on Monday, October 14 and Monday, October 28. Branch Manager **Angelina DiMascio** and families read stories, sang songs, did flannel stories on the whiteboard and brought the musical instruments out! 20 patrons attended throughout the month.
- Dudley Branch hosted Adult Craft Night: Terror-ariums on Tuesday, October 8. Library Assistant **Ana Sennett** led the event. Patrons made their own spooky terrarium and brought it home! 13 patrons attended.
- Dudley Branch hosted Candy Bar Bingo for all ages! **Angelina and Ana** led the event. Families enjoyed rounds of bingo games and had chances to win candy bars, books or glow-in-the-dark Halloween rings! 14 patrons attended.
- Dudley Branch also had take & make crafts available for families on Thursday, October 31. Librarian **Christine Webb** made 25 itsy bitsy spider craft kits for families to make in the library on Halloween or to take home with them!
- Dudley Branch hosted a Freebie Friday giveaway on their Facebook and Instagram where patrons could enter to win a free book series! Four patrons participated.

Outreach:

In addition to regularly-scheduled stops, the *Library on Wheels* Bookmobile participated in special events throughout the month. **Jacob Rachwal** and Mobile Services Senior Page **Olivia Adams** brought the Bookmobile to the *Trunk or Treat* event at the Grand Island Memorial Public Library on October 19. Families spent the afternoon celebrating and trick-or-treating from trunk to trunk. The library provided games, crafts, story times, and a photo booth. The Bookmobile had 455 visitors.

Mobile Services Librarian **Jennifer Block** and **Olivia Adams** attended the Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation's *Halloween Bash* at Lincoln Park on October 26. Families celebrated the day with hayrides, lawn games, trick-or-treating and live entertainment. There were 369 attendees. Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** and **Olivia** attended Matt Urban Center's annual *Trunk or Treat* event held at the Buffalo Central Terminal on October 29. Families enjoyed Halloween celebrations, music, face painting, and crafts. Over 234 people visited the Bookmobile to learn about library services, register for library cards and check out materials.

Andrew Maines, Mobile Services Senior Page **Loch McLaughlin** and **Amealia Brousseau** attended the Masten District's *Halloween Sp(BOOK)-A-Thon* at the Buffalo Museum of Science on October 30. The all-ages, family-focused event featured a

costume contest, science demonstrations, a scavenger hunt, cookie decorating and a cast of characters from the Justice League of WNY. Mobile Services staff promoted library services and distributed free books to attendees.

Susan Buttaccio provided a talk, *The History of the Central Library and the Significance of its Collection*, at the Eden Library on October 17.

System Youth Outreach Services staff participated in several outreach events throughout the month. **Amealia Brousseau** and Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Librarian **Heather Bermingham** participated in a Title I Literacy event at Buffalo Public School (BPS) #54 Dr. George E. Blackman School of Excellence ECC on October 16. They interacted with nearly 80 students and had them read to earn spins on the prize wheel. The prizes awarded included pencils, stickers and books. Every child was able to leave with at least one book. **Chelsey Lonberger** and System Youth Outreach Services Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** tabled at the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's *Symphonic Spooktacular* event on October 20. Over 200 attendees visited their table. They distributed a craft. They also provided parents/guardians with a **Super Reader** sticker and suggested that they give it to their children when reading together or independently.

Emily and Lake Shore Branch Manager **Stephanie Molnar** attended the *Truck or Treat* event on October 26 at Woodlawn Beach State Park in Blasdell, while **Amealia** tabled at the *Elmwood Village Safe Trick-or-Treat* event hosted by local businesses on October 27. She distributed Halloween-themed items and promoted programs at the Crane Branch Library. **Amealia** also spoke to about 60 attendees throughout the event.

System Adult Outreach Services participated in outreach events. **Carol Kowalik-Happy** presented a class at IBERO Business Center in Niagara Falls on *Library Resources for Entrepreneurs* on October 23. She also issued 11 new library cards. **Carol** tabled at the *Live Well Erie Health and Wellness Fair* held on October 24 at the M Hotel in Cheektowaga. Approximately 200 people stopped by the library table to get information on all the services available to patrons, with many expressing interest in the *Library by Mail* service. **Jacob Rachwal** tabled at the *2024 Forever Young Expo* event held at the Grapevine Banquet Center in Depew on October 31. He distributed information on library programs, Libby & hoopla streaming services, and technology training available through the TechKnow Lab. **Jacob** shared information with over 300 attendees.

Brendan Chella provided technology training at community centers throughout the month, including *Apps vs. Websites* at the Delavan-Grider Community Center and *iPad and iPhone Basics* at Tosh Collins Community Center on October 3; *Internet Basics* at the William-Emslie Family YMCA on October 7; *Saving Your Stuff* at the Dorothy J. Collier Community Center on October 9; *Home Internet Setup* on October 10 at the Delavan Grider Community Center; *iPad & iPhone Settings* at Tosh Collins Community Center on October 17; *Microsoft Word* at William-Emslie YMCA on October 21; *Book a Technology Trainer* session at Tosh Collins Community Center on October 24; *Home*

Entertainment Setup at the Northwest Amherst Community Center on October 25; and *Android Basics* at the Tosh Collins Community Center on October 31.

2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	1,728	25,954	181	2,493	513,417
Young Adult Print	254	5,517	50	890	71,225
Adult Print	3,355	38,115	556	7,044	1,771,200
Media	2,264	22,213	231	2,291	520,794
Other*	1,661	17,330	18	272	172,406
Subtotal	9,262	109,129	1,036	12,990	3,049,042

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	2,508	40,761	1,186	13,502	127,092
eAudiobooks	5,174	84,406	334	3,854	65,686
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,702
Subtotal	7,682	125,167	1,520	17,356	198,480

*The B&ECPL also provides access to all *hoopla* eBooks, eAudiobooks, videos, and music albums. These titles are not included in the collection size total, as they are not owned by the B&ECPL.

All Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Total	16,944	234,296	2,556	30,346	3,247,522

Digital Collections - Adam Rubin designed and created a short digital exhibit entitled *Central Library: A Brief History* on the Digital Collections site. The exhibit features materials primarily from the Library's archives that were digitized by **Charles Alaimo** and Rare Book Clerk **Nicole Kondziela**.

Rare Books and Special Collections - Heather Gring has been adding a number of titles and authors to the Rare Book collection, including titles by Lucille Clifton, signed first editions by Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Sandra Cisneros and more, and original calligraphic illustrations by Muhammad Zaman. Gring acquired small press and book arts works by the Wells College printing program and the small press Dry Inc. Some titles were acquired at the Rare Book Fair, such as a book arts edition of Gertrude Stein's only children's book, three early 20th century books about the

experiences of Women in America, and an illustration from 1962 of the Grosvenor Library.

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – October 31, 2024	\$301,822.97

Highlights:

M&T Bank Foundation approved a grant request for \$5,000 to help support *Bucks for Books*, specifically to purchase VOX & Wonderbooks that will be added to the Library’s collection.

The Library welcomed over 50 library enthusiasts to Big Ditch Brewing Company on Wednesday, October 16 for the *Books, Bites & Banter Happy Hour* fundraiser. The event raised over \$5,500 for the *Bucks for Books* campaign.

Mass Emails sent in October:

Happy Hour Email– sent to library cardholders that have opted in to receive communication, approximately 80,000, had a 48% open rate.

Indie Author Day Email – sent to all library card holders, over 234,000, had a 44% open rate.

4. Funding/Facilities

Funding:

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz released his 2025 Proposed Budget. He is recommending a county funding increase of \$1,271,947 (4.3%) for libraries. The additional funding will help offset inflation-related impacts on library operating costs, including contractually-obligated labor costs and the escalating cost of supplies in this challenging fiscal environment.

County funding of \$30,947,322 combined with New York State operating aid funding of \$2,460,929, use of \$839,804 in Library fund balance, and \$421,373 in other library revenue, brings the Library’s 2025 proposed operating budget to \$34,669,428; a 4.7% increase over the 2024 County Adopted Budget. In addition to the operating budget, \$601,418 in estimated state aid is included in the Library Grants Budget.

Erie County’s 2025 Proposed Capital Budget supports improvements to the county-owned downtown Central Library and to system-related improvements, specifically:

- \$3,500,000 in bond funds for “Various Improvements & Upgrades”
- \$1,000,000 in bond funds for Central Building Envelope Improvements

The next event in the budget review process will be the Library’s budget hearing before the Erie County Legislature’s Finance & Management/Budget Committee, scheduled for Wednesday, November 13. A public hearing/comment opportunity on the overall County Budget is expected to be scheduled later in November. The Legislature’s deliberations will continue until their vote on the proposed budget, scheduled for December 2. Should there be any vetoes, the Legislature has scheduled a veto override vote on December 13.

Facilities:

On Wednesday October 2, the Central Library Space Utilization Study Planning Committee reconvened with Bostwick Design Partnership to clarify the overall cost of the proposed space utilization study. Bostwick revised the cost schedule of the project to reflect costs that would be considered “essential” and costs that would be considered “enhanced.” It was determined that the enhanced costs would be built into the total cost of the project as contingencies to be used at the discretion of Erie County and the B&ECPL during the course of the study. The cost of the study, including essential and enhanced fees, totaled \$286,500.

From October 8 – October 12, Facility Operations Manager **Andrew Wiede** attended the International Facility Managers Association World Workplace Conference & Expo in San Antonio, TX. Topics covered at the presentations and symposiums included facility safety, security and emergencies in the workplace; navigating the “hybrid” workplace; integration of facility management functions; creating a new class of smart, healthy, and sustainable buildings; and integrating AI into the future of facility management.

On October 9, bids were unsealed for the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library Phase 2 construction project. This work will include the rehabilitation of the roof and skylight. The lowest bid was received from Allstate General Contracting, Inc. at a total cost of \$557,000. Including the accepted alternates for the skylight reconstruction and solar control window film, the total contract for the work is currently \$664,300.

On October 21, the Central Library loading dock replacement commenced. Demolition of the existing concrete has been substantially completed, while results of the soil and compaction tests should be received the week of November 18. Following the results of the tests and after addressing any necessary concerns, concrete is scheduled to be poured with a cure time of roughly 28 days. Completion of the project is anticipated for mid-December.

On October 24, bids were unsealed for the Central Library marble column rehabilitation project. This work will address the shifting marble slabs at the interior columns located throughout the Central Library and add decorative metal straps

around the columns to re-secure the slabs to the columns. It also includes minor exterior concrete and granite repair work. The lowest bid was received from Morris Masonry at a total of \$137,877.

On October 28, the RFP for the East Clinton Branch Library project was advertised. Potential bidders will have until November 15 to submit their bids. The proposed work for this project included roof rehabilitation; window and door replacement; exterior brick repointing and concrete repair; concrete slab rehabilitation; floor tile replacement; and security camera installation.

5. Staff Development

Disability Awareness Training for All Employees - In conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October, the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities provided Library staff with training on disability awareness and a general overview of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All employees could select from four session dates, with both online and in-person options, and attend the best time and format for them. In total, 54 employees chose to participate in this training, with the recording now available for everyone on the Staff Intranet.

"Words in the Workplace" Communication Wellness Series Starts for All Staff - In partnership with EviCore EAP, Erie County's Employee Assistance Program services provider, in October the Library kicked off a new online training series aimed at helping all employees enhance interpersonal skills, foster a positive workplace culture, and improve overall workplace well-being through mindful communication. The first session of this six-part series was on October 22 on "Communication Skills for Professionals." The series runs through December 19, with recordings of all sessions added to the Staff Intranet after each live date. Any employee who attends the full series and completes a short reflection for each topic is entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of two \$50 gift cards from Target! Prizes are courtesy of EviCore EAP.

New Peer-to-Peer Learning Resource Helps Employees Work More Efficiently - In October, the Library published a new Staff Development Quick Guide for all employees called *Organizing Email for Personal Productivity*. This tip sheet aims to help staff better manage their time and priorities when working through their email inboxes. This resource was created with support from Staff Development by Process Improvement Manager **Erin Vest**, who based the guide on what she learned at a recent American Library Association eLearning course funded by B&ECPL. All staff may continue to take advantage of this handy reference sheet, which is now available on the Staff Intranet.

WNYLRC Annual Conference Attended by Several Library Staff - The Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) held its annual conference called *The Intersect Un-Conference* on October 11 at the Central Library. Five employees were funded by B&ECPL to attend: **Amealia Brousseau** from Central Library, **Alyssa Clark** from North Park Library Branch, **Alex Dotegowski** from Orchard Park Public Library,

Heather Gring from Central Library and **Jacob Rachwal** from Central Library. Many other staff members attended through funding from the Librarians Association and other sources.

Webinars - Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other virtual learning programs in September, with several staff members attending sessions including: *30 Favorite Story time Books and How to Use Them* (from New York State Library); *Help Your Patrons Address Legal Affairs with Confidence* (from Gale and NOVEL NY); *Representing Your Library: Advocacy Training for Legislative Meetings* (from WNYLRC), and *The Adult Programming Equation* (from Central New York Library Resource Council).

6. Communications

Advocacy: Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** presented during the Western New York Library Resources Council’s webinar *Representing Your Library: Advocacy Training for Legislative Meetings*. WNYLRC Executive Director Sheryl Knab led the session for library managers and trustees.

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Media Release	East Clinton St. Library temporarily closed due to vehicle accident.	Sent to Buffalo media, October 11
Radio interview with Librarian Jacob Rachwal	Health and wellness programs, the Diversity Fair and resources to help families.	WUFO Radio, October 14
Media Release	Central Library turns 60	Sent to Buffalo and state media, WGRZ TV, October 14
Taped TV interview with Assistant Deputy Director Joy Testa Cinquino	<i>Books, Bites and Banter</i> fundraiser	WIVB TV, Channel 4, October 16
My View, opinion piece letter to the Editor by Library Director John Spears	Marketing the 60th anniversary of the Central Library; explaining the significance of the building and its history, and speaking to the threats facing libraries and intellectual freedom today.	The Buffalo News, October 17
Media Release	National Friends of Libraries Week	Bee Publications, October 20
Taped radio interview with Assistant Deputy Director Dorinda Darden	Importance of libraries, job, career, health resources, ease of getting a library card	WHIT Radio, recorded October 30, date to air TBD

Live TV news interview with Library Director John Spears	<i>Indie Author Day</i>	WIVB TV, Channel 4, October 31
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Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	136	1,152	2,188	32,389	55	13,897
Flickr	36	159	3,681	34,130	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,749	27,055	N/A	N/A
Instagram	33	207	7,817	42,919	139	6,839
Pinterest	13	316	83	916	-1	2,053
X(formerly Twitter) ²	110	647	152	2,623	-67	10,889
YouTube	8	84	2,292	24,788	13	700
TikTok	1	5	2,112	6,155	150	1,002
Total	337	2,570	21,074	170,975	289	35,439

¹ Google Ads is provided to the Library through a grant. Monthly activity based on public clicks.

² Twitter (X) analytics were hand-calculated, as the platform now only offers built-in analytics statistics to premium (paying) users.

7. Partnerships

Centro Culturale Italiano di Buffalo - Libby Stengel worked with Lianna Tatman, Executive Director of Centro Culturale Italiano di Buffalo, to coordinate a donation of early 20th century naturalization documents and certificates from Italian immigrants to Buffalo. Tatman intends to digitize the documents for public viewing and use in genealogy research services.

Families Together in New York State - Jacob Rachwal met with Precious Lugo, the Statewide Youth Engagement Specialist of Families Together in New York State - Youth Power on October 1. They discussed providing a *Job Fair* at the Central Library in April 2025 for similar agencies in need.

Western New York Independent Living - Jacob Rachwal met with Todd Vaarwerk, Chief Policy Officer at Western New York Independent Living, on October 18. **Jacob** provided him with a tour of the Assistive Technology Room at the Central Library and Mr. Vaarwerk completed an accessibility audit.

System Services staff were also in contact or attended meetings with representatives of the following groups and organizations:

- Buffalo State University

- Child Care Resource Network
- Children’s Centers in the Courts
- Cornell University
- Help Me Grow
- Liftoff Western New York
- Live Well Erie Working Groups
- New York State Department of Taxation and Finance
- Outreach Coordinators in New York’s Public Library Systems
- State University of New York at Buffalo (UB)
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees
- Youth Services Consultants in New York’s Public Library Systems

8. Director Activities

Meetings/Events Attended by Director

October 2024

Date	Meeting/Event
October 1, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 1, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 2, 2024	Meeting - Aaron Swan
October 2, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Space Utilization Study Fee Clarifications with Erie County Representatives
October 2, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Librarians Association Negotiations Pre-Meeting
October 3, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Buffalo Cultural Leaders
October 4, 2024	Virtual Meeting - ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
October 6, 2024	Virtual Meeting - IFLA MetLib Steering Committee
October 7, 2024	Virtual Meeting - WNYLRC Executive Committee
October 7, 2024	Meeting - Librarians Association Negotiations
October 8, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 8, 2024	Virtual Meeting - PULISDO
October 8, 2024	Media - Record NYLA Award Speech
October 8, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 9, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Managers/Directors
October 10, 2024	Retreat - Rose Jade: 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition
October 10, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Library Visioning with Mary Beth Debus
October 11, 2024	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
October 11, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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October 14, 2024	Meeting - Administrative Team
October 14, 2024	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Steering Committee
October 14, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
October 15, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 15, 2024	Virtual Meeting - ErieNet, LDC, Audit and Finance Committee
October 15, 2024	Virtual Meeting - ErieNet, LDC, Board of Directors
October 16, 2024	Meeting - Aaron Swan
October 16, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 16, 2024	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
October 17, 2024	Virtual Meeting - PLS Directors
October 17, 2024	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
October 18, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Intellectual Freedom Manual
October 18, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
October 18, 2024	Event - Central's 60th Birthday Party
October 19, 2024	Meeting and Presentation - Association of Contracting Libraries Meeting at East Aurora
October 22, 2024	Meeting - WNYLRC Annual Meeting at the National Comedy Center
October 23, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Deputy Director Interviews Planning
October 23, 2024	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
October 23, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Intellectual Freedom Manual Interpretation Working Group #1
October 23, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Intellectual Freedom Manual Interpretation Working Group #2
October 24, 2024	Meeting - 2025 Position Requests
October 24, 2024	Meeting - Dorinda Darden and Samantha Purpora
October 24, 2024	Interviews for Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer
October 24, 2024	Virtual Meeting - ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee
October 25, 2024	Meeting - Erin Vest
October 25, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
October 28, 2024	Meeting - Administrative Team
October 29, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 29, 2024	Meeting - CLOE Leadership Accelerator Program
October 29, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 29, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Library Visioning with Mary Beth Debus
October 31, 2024	Interview for Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer
October 31, 2024	Virtual Meeting - PERB IP Determination

October 31, 2024	Media Interview - Indie Author Day at WIVB
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Appendices
A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1073	10114	4744	34429
Children 5 and under	1861	14185	7595	52438
Children 6-11	2937	18219	6519	40751
Intergenerational/Combined	4453	46090	16438	116535
Teens	276	3641	685	7069
Regular Total	10600	92249	35981	251222
Regular Total	10600	92249	35981	251222
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	16	161	153	1854
Children 5 and under	0	3	0	48
Children 6-11	0	5	0	186
Intergenerational/Combined	10	56	147	1094
Teens	1	74	0	174
Live Virtual Total	27	299	300	3356
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	4	48	119	1208
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	19	236	2573
Intergenerational/Combined	7	91	786	8251
Teens	0	0	0	0
Recorded Virtual Total	13	158	1141	12032
Virtual Total	40	457	1441	15388
Grand Total	10640	92706	37422	266610

*Regular programs include group programs, one-on-one programs, and self-directed programs (including individual take & make crafts).

Other Statistics:

Consolidated statistics on library visits, website visits, circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and program attendance and a summary of open hours can be found at www.buffalolib.org/about-becpl/monthly-statistics.

Detailed reports on circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and library visits can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2024-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries, Kenilworth & Kenmore Branches –
submitted by Mary Muscarella, Director

Classical Sundays: The first Sunday of every month, the Kenmore Library has a performance of classical music on the library floor at 1 pm. The first performance was on Sunday, October 6 with Brazilian guitar duo *Choro*. On Sunday, December 1, we will be hosting *Quintessence*, a woodwind quintet made up of students from the SUNY Fredonia School of Music.

Check It Out newsletter: A quarterly review magazine written 'by library patrons, for library patrons.' This publication has been extremely popular with patrons of the Kenilworth & Kenmore libraries, and we have now expanded our reach. The magazine is currently being distributed at 12 other contracting libraries in the System.

Bad Art Night: Always a favorite! For teens & adults, an opportunity to showcase their lack of artistic talent. Every craft supply we own is made available for use, and each Bad Art Night has a theme. The most recent theme was 'Cookbook Catastrophe', featuring many 1960s-era Jell-O mold recipes.

NYS Dept. of Labor Job Fair: In partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, we will be hosting a job fair at the Kenmore Library on Friday, November 22 from 11 am – 2 pm. So far, there are 18 employers scheduled to be in attendance.

AKG Art: In partnership with the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, the Kenmore Library will host a Drop-In Art-making workshop with fiber artist Amanda Browder on Saturday, November 23 from 12-4 pm.

Other programs include:

- Preschool Story time Tuesday mornings
- LEGO "Bricks-To-Go" boxes
- Toddler Story time Thursday mornings
- Family Story time Wednesday evenings
- Sensational Story time @ Kenilworth Tuesday mornings
- Book Groups for adults at both Kenilworth & Kenmore libraries
- Coming soon: Stuffie Sleepover; Noon Year's Eve Party; Book Bags for Teens
- STEM Toy Tuesdays
- Button Making Wednesdays
- Board Game Saturdays
- Volunteer Computer Coaches
- Volunteer Notary Public

Agenda Item G - Report of the Foundation. Trustee El-Behairy shared that the Foundation has received a draft of the strategic plan. She stated that they will be meeting more regularly to review the draft.

Agenda Item H - The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the ACT Board meeting was held on Saturday, October 19, at the Aurora Town Public Library. She stated that Director Spears and ADD-Controller Patronik made the presentation about the budget interesting and that attendees were appreciative of that. The next ACT meeting will be in March 2025. She informed the Board that she has already reached out to Trustee El-Behairy because there were questions about the Foundation and how member libraries can take advantage of that. Discussion ensued regarding the ACT meetings and Director Spears informed the Board again that attending the annual ACT meeting is informative and an easy way to fulfill their Trustee Education Requirement.

Agenda Item H.1 - Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Kelly shared that she attended the Aurora Town Public Library's Board meeting. The Board emphasized that the ACT meeting went well and that it was a full house. She also stated that the Aurora Town Public Library has submitted a request to make a current part-time position into a full-time position. Discussion ensued regarding this request. Further discussion ensued regarding how the Library determines staffing at member libraries.

Next, Trustee El-Behairy mentioned the *Angola Public Library Annual Harvest Dinner* and stated that it was a lot of fun and encouraged other Board members to be aware of events like it. Discussion ensued regarding member library events.

Agenda Item I - Public Comment. Martha Buyer shared that because of the work she does professionally, she wanted to share her knowledge about e-rate. She stated that since e-rate supports schools, libraries and other worth funding recipients there is little chance that it will be dissolved. However, there might be changes with the management of it. Martha Buyer then explained the importance of e-rate.

Agenda Item J - Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K - New Business.

Agenda Item K.1 - Executive Session. Chair Johnson proposed to enter into Executive Session in order to discuss the employment of an officer of the Library. Trustee Sasiadek motioned to enter into Executive Session, Trustee Kelly seconded and the Board entered into Executive Session at 4:17 p.m.

Trustee Amodeo motioned to exit the Executive Session that discussed appointments of Deputy Director positions, Trustee Sasiadek seconded, and the Board exited Executive Session at 4:58 p.m.

Agenda Item L - Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Sasiadek with a second by Trustee Amodeo, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Moore
Secretary