

B&ECPL Board of Trustees Adopts 2005 Budget

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) Board of Trustees adopted a 2005 budget at its regular monthly meeting on December 16th, announced Board Chair Rebecca Pordum. Total operating revenue was approved at \$26,071,143.

Erie County Funding

On December 8th, the Erie County Legislature adopted a heavily amended version of County Executive Joel Giambra's "Red Budget," which reduced Library funding by 80% and would have necessitated the closing of all library doors after January 1st. County Budget Office and Legislature staff have indicated that the amended budget contains a [property tax for library purposes](#) equal to the Executive's "Green Budget." The "Green Budget" reflects an overall decrease of 11% or \$3,082,980 from the B&ECPL's 2005 budget request. County property tax support declines 10.4% from \$24,197,118 in 2004 to \$21,671,833 in 2005.

Service Reductions

"While we are extremely thankful to keep doors open for the community in 2005, this level of funding still forces us to make very difficult decisions and reduce library services throughout the entire B&ECPL System," said Board Chair Rebecca Pordum. "The upheaval associated with implementing the reduced County share budget will, regretfully, require layoffs at multiple locations."

To address the shortfall, the following strategies will be implemented:

- Provide Sunday Service only at Central Library (City of Buffalo), Audubon Library (Northern Erie County) and Orchard Park Library (Southern Erie County). [Sunday service at the Crane, Dudley, Hamburg, Julia B. Reinstein and Kenmore Libraries would be discontinued];
- Implement work hour and/or other operating expense reductions, impacting the Boston, Clarence, Collins, Concord, Eden, Lackawanna, Marilla, Newstead, Orchard Park and West Seneca Libraries;
- Reduce hours of service for libraries with fewer than two full-time outlets to or near the New York State minimum standard, impacting the Ewell Free (Alden), Angola, Aurora, Elma, Grand Island, Lackawanna, North Collins, City of Tonawanda and West Seneca Libraries. [Open hours of service reduced by up to 10 hours per week];

Further Budget Information

> [B&ECPL Director's Budget Message and Board Resolution](#) (PDF)

> [2005 Budget Overview](#) (PDF)

> [The County Tax for Library Purposes](#) (PDF)

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- Reduce branch operations for libraries with multiple branches. [Applicable only to multi-branch libraries with two or more full-time outlets, impacting the Amherst, Cheektowaga, Hamburg, Lancaster and Town of Tonawanda libraries];
- Reduce the 15 City of Buffalo Branches combined regular open hours per week from 566 hours to 446 hours [120 hour reduction];
- Reconfigure/reduce Central Library Administration and System Support Services; and
- Reduce hours at the Central Library's Grosvenor and Children's Rooms, suspend public computer training indefinitely and eliminate mobile library service.

“In developing this approach to scaling back services, we identified guiding principles to equitably reduce allocations throughout the System,” stated Pordum. “The principles applied in this process were to preserve all libraries' State charters and continue to meet State minimum standards.”

Budget cuts of this magnitude come at the busiest time in the B&ECPL's 168-year history. Circulation reached record-breaking highs in 2003, and trends continue in 2004. Year-to-date circulation is up 6%, in-library computer usage is up 24%, and materials shipped among libraries is up almost 12%.

Future Challenges

“Unfortunately, the budget outlook for 2006 may be even more ominous than the challenges we are currently facing,” said Director Michael C. Mahaney. “Further County budget cuts would force multiple library closings. We are extremely grateful for the community's support in these trying times, and encourage continued [advocacy](#) at the County and State Levels.”