



Erie County Legislature
Mid-Year Budget Hearing Wednesday, July 18, 2012 12:00 pm

Jack Connors, Chairman, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees:

Good afternoon and thank you for having us here today. On behalf of the Library, please accept my sincerest appreciation for your time. As always, I must express the Library's gratitude for your ongoing support and confidence in the services we provide to the residents of Erie County. {Recognize any Trustees in attendance, here}

Today, we will be demonstrating the efficiencies of the Library by assuring you we are providing services within the confines of the 2012 budget which includes using a portion of the Library's fund balance. Ken Stone, CFO will get into more of the details. Carol Batt, Chief Operating Officer will answer your questions and Joy Testa Cinquino is here to share a few words from our Library Director, Mary Jean Jakubowski.

Joy Testa Cinquino, Assistant Deputy Director, Development & Communications on behalf of Library Director, Mary Jean Jakubowski:

Hello, I am Joy Testa Cinquino, Assistant Deputy Director of Development & Communications for the Library. I have been asked to speak on behalf of Director Mary Jean Jakubowski who apologizes for being unable to be present in person.

As you will soon hear, the B&ECPL is functioning within its allocated 2012 budget. I am sure you will agree this is good, as we fully recognize it is the Library Board and Administration's fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Erie County to do so.

HOWEVER, I must express that while today's meeting is for us to demonstrate we are working within the budget, it cannot be emphasized enough how much we are stretching each and every dollar in order to do so. In my opinion, the REAL question of today should be: **With the \$ allocated by Erie County for the Library in 2012 IS the Library able to provide all of the services necessary to meet the needs of your constituents?** Simply put: It's a struggle....and in some cases the answer is clearly NO [we are not meeting your constituents' needs]. The Library continues to be open fewer hours – over 5,100 fewer annual service hours compared to service hours budgeted in 2010. That's nearly 100 fewer open hours per week system wide. It must be noted that some of our 2012 open hours are being funded by private or municipal funding – funding which is tenuous for the future at best. Even so, our computers are at maximum use, training programs are filled and circulation and library visits are up **2.6%**. Staff continues to work above and beyond so that the Library maintains basic services and provide as many high use services as possible. We are examining and assessing every purchase, every process, and every position. We are exploring revenue options and we are cautionary toward the unexpected: the potential for increased costs in utilities, materials, personnel, benefits, etc. We are re-adjusting and re-adapting each and every day in an attempt to meet even the basic needs of residents.

As recently as last week, we received a comment from a library user in Buffalo complaining that *their* library is only open 4 days a week. A number of library users have asked why the library doesn't have Sunday hours year-round. Daily, we have waiting lists for use of our computers. We are regularly asked for additional computer training classes and more children's programming. We have significant borrower waiting lists for certain popular materials because budget constraints have limited our material buying budget.

So, today as Mr. Stone discusses the status of the Library's budget - the fact that we are not overspending our 2012 budget - it may seem to you that library services are OK - They are NOT. How could they be when hours are cut and constituent demand for services are up?

I therefore ask you to consider that working within the budget is but ONE aspect of the purpose of this meeting - the SECOND aspect is to keep in mind the residents of Erie County and their demand for increased library services and a THIRD is to recognize that the current budget allocation is insufficient to meet their growing needs.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jean Jakubowski
Library Director

Mr. Stone.....if you would now report on the mid-year budget status.

###