



**Erie County Legislature 2013 Proposed Budget Hearing  
Thursday, November 15, 2012 @ 12:30 pm**

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

Good afternoon and thank you for inviting us here today. On behalf of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, 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}

Every day, nearly 17,000 Erie County residents turn to one of the 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries for free resources and information. Our libraries promote lifelong learning and inspire discovery through books, reference and resource materials, author visits, Wi-Fi, computer access and training, databases, downloadable books, music, audio and video.

More and more, people come to their library for help in searching for a new job. We help those who don't have the computer skills to do online research as well as assist them to complete online job

applications – 50% of mid-size companies and almost all large corporations take only online applications; even for entry level positions. If we want to get people back to work, we need our libraries.

This past summer, the 41,000 Erie County children who participated in the Library's Summer Reading program clocked 1 million minutes reading. 2011 saw library visits increase to 3.65 million. More than 842,700 hours were logged on our public computers and our circulation rose to 8.15 million.

Compared to any other county-funded service, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System provides a significant return on investment. For every public dollar received from Erie County, our community...YOUR community... receives \$6.70 worth of library programs and services.

AND We do all this against the backdrop of losing 5,100 hours because of funding cuts since 2010.

It goes without saying, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries are a bargain. Mary Jean and Carol are passing out peer institution comparison data from the 2012 Public Library Data Service Survey. Compared to 20 other public library systems

serving similar sized populations, it is evident the B&ECPL squeezes every penny we can from every dollar invested back to services provided to your constituents.

For instance:

- Please take a look at page 2/9. B&ECPL's operating expenditures are a low ranking 15<sup>th</sup> out of the 20
- On page 3/9 B&ECPL's per capita expenditure is 14<sup>th</sup> of 20
- Page 4/9 reflects the average cost per open hour is the second lowest of the group – 19<sup>th</sup> out of 20
- B&ECPL's 37 libraries cover the County's 1,045 square miles yet our average branch size, 9,252 sq. feet, ranks us 16<sup>th</sup> out of 20

Why do I share this with you?

I do so to explain that we have done all we can do to stretch our current level of funding to demonstrate we are clearly cost effective.

But, the bottom line is this: We need sufficient and sustainable funding to cover increased operating expenses to maintain our hours of operations and levels of service. AND we must have additional funds to restore hours, and in turn, bring back the

hours and services your constituents are asking us for.

To further explain, I would now like to turn this over to Library Director, Mary Jean Jakubowski:

**Mary Jean Jakubowski:**

Good Afternoon, thank you Jack and thank you to members of the Erie County Legislature for providing this opportunity to comment on the proposed budget.

In order to proactively address and meet service needs, our budget request, with essential input provided by the System and Member Library Boards of Trustees, Library Administration and staff, calls for the restoration of \$3.6 million in funding which will allow for the return of open hours and services that were cut in 2011 and 2012.

I have said it before.....THE LIBRARY IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE. Without ongoing stabilized funding, the Library will be faced with Solomon-like choices – we can either cut more hours or close branches, we can either be an economic engine or an institution that will become just a shadow of its former self.

The 2013 Library's budget request to the county was for \$25,495,566. The County Executive's proposed budget of

\$22,172,457 is **\$3,323,109** less than our request. The proposed budget will increase the Library's funding by \$300,000.

While we appreciate the proposed \$300,000 in additional funding, this amount does not come anywhere near to what the System requested to restore open hours, services, materials and the staffing levels to support them.

For clarity's sake, I just want to point out that on the face of the budget, it may look like the Library is receiving \$2M more than the actual proposed \$300,000. This is because the \$2M inter-fund transfer that the County Legislature recommended and implemented in 2011 and that was continued in 2012 will now come out of the 2013 Combined County/Library Property Tax revenue. There will no longer be an inter-fund transfer for the Library's funding. For accounting purposes, this is basically a wash – the \$2M in property tax revenue is offset by eliminating the \$2M inter-fund transfer.

Having our funds come completely from property tax revenue was a request the Library made of the County Executive. We are thankful for this change because now the taxpayers will see exactly where our funding comes from.

The bottom line of the County Executive's budget recommendation is that the Library will receive a \$300,000 funding increase.

There are two additional significant components of the proposed budget I wish to bring to your attention....

1. Increase costs to the Library for services provided to the Library through the Division of Information & Support Services, Purchasing and Fleet. If the budget is approved as proposed, the Library will pay the County \$29,626 more in 2013 than we did in 2012. In essence, the \$300,000 in increased funding will realistically provide approximately \$270,000 in *usable* operating dollars.
2. No capital funding for the Library is included in the 2013 Capital Budget which makes accessing State Library Construction Grants – which share these costs – nearly impossible.

Let me take a moment to remind you of our request:

Our \$3.6M budget request would:

- Bring back the 5,100 open hours that have been lost across our 37 libraries beginning with the 2011 budget;
- Restore essential library programs and training; and
- Provide more effective public access and expand high-demand services.

The funding needed to restore the 5,100 hours is \$2,061,395. The cost to restore essential and asked for library programs, services, training and outreach is \$746,308; and

In order to bring our libraries back in terms of public access and expansion of high-demand services, we would need an additional \$815,406 restored.

Let me assure you, as always, the Boards of Trustees, Library Administration and staff will work to maximize the impact of its funding and ensure that each of our 37 libraries across the County provides your constituents with cost-effective services, a fundamental destination for information, as well as exciting and enriching programs and events.

AND you have our commitment that we will continue to implement more efficient governance and financial stability options to ensure long-term sustainability of the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System.

It cannot be emphasized enough how much we are stretching each and every dollar in order to provide all of the services necessary to meet the needs of your constituents.

- We continue to examine and assess every purchase, every process, and every position.
- We are committed to continue to spend down our reserve for operational purposes.
- We are exploring revenue and fundraising options; later this week we will host more than 300 people for a Library fundraiser at the Hotel Lafayette and we currently have a “Bucks for Books” campaign in progress that has raised over \$30,000 in the just past month for new materials.
- AND we are cautionary toward the unexpected. We know there is potential for increased, unexpected costs in utilities, materials, personnel, benefits, etc. We are re-adjusting and re-adapting each and every day.



Given this backdrop of challenges, the Library strives to meet the needs of Erie County residents.

- Daily, we have waiting lists for use of our computers. We are regularly asked for additional computer training classes and more children's programming.
- With sponsorships and support from the Library Foundation we will preserve, promote, display and share the treasures held in our Special Collections and Rare Book Room.
- We will deliver literacy services throughout Erie County using our network of 37 public libraries in partnership with Buffalo and Erie County literacy service providers and innovative literacy programming.

I can't put it any more simply – your 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries are key to your community's livelihood.

Libraries save you and your constituents' money -- hundreds of dollars a month --- by simply getting and using a library card and/or taking advantage of the Library's wide-variety of programs and services. Folks can even stay home, log in and get access to information. In fact, let me tell you a story that was shared with me last week. An Erie County resident was visiting another country where English was not the first language. She

had run out of reading materials, but everything available for purchase was written in Spanish. She shared how easy it was to just go online, access our website and download books she wanted. She said until just then, she had not realized just how grateful she was to have a Buffalo and Erie County Public Library library card. It took her to be thousands of miles from home, but she now appreciates the value of her library services. The Library, your library, is accessible anytime and from anyplace, anywhere in the world.

Therefore, I say to you.....

Investing \$3.6M in the Library is a SMART investment; it is an investment in our children, our families, our seniors and our County. It will mean more help for folks looking for work. It will mean early literacy for more children. It will mean providing quality time for families. And, it will mean keeping our residents engaged. Our Libraries are here for all people and the people want us here.

Restoring the Library's \$3.6M in funding is an investment in Erie County. Thank you.

And now Mr. Stone will share more details pertaining to our 2013 budget.

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**More facts**

**The Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries by the Numbers**

In 2011, System-wide:

- 842,000 + public computer hours were logged – many by people looking for jobs
- 470,000 + reference questions were answered
- On any given day, nearly 17,000 people walk through our doors. Visitors to Erie Counties Public Libraries was 3,657,908 million people in 2011 – higher than the annual attendance of all of the local professional sports teams combined.

And this year, through the end of August:

- 87,560 patrons accessed Wi-Fi from the libraries
- 170,229 eBooks were borrowed

4,524,222 total hits were made to the Library System Website and Catalog

Based on 2011 library statistics, here is how those numbers break down.

Library Program/Services	Average Retail Cost	Savings to Community
8,154,384 Items borrowed: including books, CDs, DVDs, downloads	\$9.35	\$76,243,490
842,769 patron public computer hours logged	\$12/hour	\$10,113,228
62,212 children’s program attendees and 35,469 adult program attendees	\$7.45 (weighted average) for a movie matinee	\$727,723

3,184,215 articles downloaded from the Library's online database resources	\$15 to purchase an online article	\$47,763,225
470,264 reference questions asked & reference materials loaned from outside libraries	\$15 to purchase reference support or reference materials	\$7,053,960