

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: E.1.



Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees
Executive Committee Meeting Report
November 12, 2020

Present via Zoom conference call: Executive Committee Chair Kathleen Berens Bucki; members Sheldon Berlow, Katie Burd and Elaine Panty; and ex-officio member Frank Housh. Vice Chair Kimberly Johnson was present in person at the Central Library, as was Library Director Mary Jean Jakubowski, Chief Financial Officer (C.F.O.) Ken Stone and Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O.) Jeannine Doyle.

In keeping with Executive Order 202.72 issued November 3, 2020 which extends previous Executive Orders regarding emergency adjustments to the Open Meetings Law in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through December 3, 2020, this meeting was offered remotely via Zoom. As required by the Governor's Order, the public had the ability to listen to the proceeding via Zoom, and the meeting was recorded, transcribed, and made available on the Library's website. This information was included in the meeting announcement.

Chair Bucki called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. After a call of the roll, was noted a quorum was present.

The Committee reviewed the proposed agenda for the November 19, 2020 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) Board of Trustees meeting. Chair Bucki relayed she had spoken with Director Jakubowski earlier that day about developments regarding COVID-19 Micro-Cluster Zones for Erie County and asked that Director Jakubowski speak to those during the Report of the Director portion of the meeting.

The Executive Committee reviewed proposed Resolution 2020-34 – Budget NYS Construction Aid Award – Crane Branch Library Improvements Phase 2. C.F.O. Stone noted the City of Buffalo has approved almost all Phase 1 contractors and he expected the project to commence by the end of the year. With the budgeting of Phase 2, it would be possible to smoothly transition between the 2 phases of the project. C.F.O. Stone also reported on the monthly financials, including that the B&ECPL remains within budget. He conveyed New York State continues to withhold 20% of funding for 2020. Finally, he noted the Erie County Comptroller's Office had completed an audit of fine revenues at the Central Library and found that the internal controls were "adequately designed and operating effectively." He conveyed the auditors recommended some procedural improvements, which the library has already adopted.

The Executive Committee reviewed remaining agenda items. Director Jakubowski brought up the City of Buffalo is currently designated as a Yellow Zone as per the Governor's Micro-Cluster Strategy. She reminded the Committee the B&ECPL had developed a COVID-19 Micro-Cluster Plan (Plan) that had been emailed/mailed to Board members the previous

week. As per the Plan, libraries in a Yellow Zone continue to operate as usual. However, Director Jakubowski acknowledged that current reports indicate that COVID-19 numbers are continuing to rise in Erie County. If current trends continue, the City of Buffalo could be designated as an Orange Zone as early as the upcoming weekend. If that is the case, libraries in the Orange Zone will close to the public but staff will continue to report. Libraries will begin to offer walk-up and/or curbside service as feasible. C.O.O. Doyle has been working on coordinating staff so that a transition to such services would be seamless. C.F.O. Stone is working with the City to obtain permission for parking spaces for curbside pick-up at the Central Library and Crane Branch Library. Director Jakubowski noted that in the case of an Orange Zone designation, she would recommend the closure of the East Clinton Branch Library, as its staff could be better utilized elsewhere. Chair Bucki asked what other coverage could be provided to the community around the East Clinton Branch Library in the event of such a closure. Director Jakubowski answered the Dudley Branch Library is close by, and materials requested for East Clinton would be forwarded to that location with patrons being notified of the change.

Director Jakubowski also reported Library Administration is preparing in case the City is designated as a Red Zone. As per the Plan, libraries in a designated Red Zone would close entirely, with only essential staff to report. Director Jakubowski noted the Central Library is also the System headquarters, and as such may need to continue to provide System services to libraries in a variety of Zone/non-Zone statuses. Administration is currently looking into what staff would be deemed essential and who would work onsite vs remotely in the case of a Red Zone designation.

Throughout the planning process, Library Administration continues to keep staff abreast of the current situation and prepare them for changes as they occur. Director Jakubowski took a moment to thank staff and administration for all their hard work and adaptability in these challenging times. Finally, Director Jakubowski emphasized the Plan applies to only those libraries within the City of Buffalo. The Plan has been shared with directors of contracting libraries for informational purposes, and the System will continue to provide guidance on such matters to the directors and their Boards.

Trustee Panty asked whether libraries not located in a Zone would have an impact on those in a designated Zone. Director Jakubowski remarked she thought the impact would go the other way - if there are libraries in the System that are closed or offering limited service due to Zone designations, it may increase the traffic to libraries that remain open to the public. She noted she will be meeting with managers and directors next week and would be discussing some of these possibilities. At the moment, this is just speculation, as everything is new. Trustee Panty and Trustee Berlow both expressed their appreciation for the thoroughness of the Plan and procedures put together by Administration.

Continuing to review the agenda items, Director Jakubowski reported the Library Foundation is meeting next week, and there would be a report at the Board Meeting. She also conveyed a message had been sent to the ACT Board about hosting a budget briefing via Zoom on either 12/5 or 12/12.

Chair Bucki noted she would be attending the Budget Hearing before the Erie County Legislature's Finance and Management/Budget Committee on 11/17, either in person or

however it is determined to be held. Chair Bucki, Director Jakubowski and C.F.O. Stone will all be offering testimony. Trustee Panty declared she wanted to show support, but may not be able to attend depending on the City's Zone status. Trustee Berlow suggested a letter be prepared indicating the Board's support of the proposed budget even if they cannot be at the hearing in person due to health and safety concerns. All Board members could sign the statement, and it could be delivered to the Legislature at the Budget Hearing. Director Jakubowski confirmed she would draft such a letter.

Trustee Housh left the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Trustee Panty next brought attention to the letter that had been shared with the Executive Committee, which Library Technology Clerk P. Ryan Burgess had sent to Legislator April Baskin regarding his support for the proposed budget. Director Jakubowski indicated that Ryan had sent the letter on his own and shared it with Library Administration. She pointed out the B&ECPL had template letters regarding support of the proposed budget available at all libraries and online for community members to complete and send to their legislators.

The public had no comment.

Director Jakubowski noted Resolution 2020-35 – Resolution to Honor Dawn Peters under New Business. She shared that Dawn is available to attend the Board Meeting, and asked the committee how they would like to hold the meeting. She noted if Buffalo's Zone designation changes to Orange or Red, the Central Library would be closed to the public. If the meeting has an in-person component, there would need to be a procedure for allowing interested community members into the meeting. Trustee Johnson asked if the in-person meeting would be held in the Collections Gallery Conference Room and if there would be a video component. Director Jakubowski confirmed both counts. After discussion, it was determined to keep the meeting as a hybrid meeting, offering both an in-person and remote option; if there are any significant developments in the next week that preclude this method, further notification will be made.

After review, the Committee had no changes for the proposed agenda.

The Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Berlow, with a second by Trustee Panty.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Johnson