

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
March 16, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, March 16, 2023, 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
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Lucy A. Candelario
John D. Craik
Frank Gist
Theodore K. Johnson
Elaine M. Panty
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq.

Chair Kimberly 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. There were no changes to the proposed agenda.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of February 16, 2023. On motion by Trustee Panty, seconded by Trustee T. Johnson, the Minutes were unanimously approved as mailed.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair Johnson reported Library Advocacy Day had gone well; the group from the B&ECPL had productive meetings with legislators and/or their staff as well as attended the event rally. She noted Director John Spears would provide updates on the events at the Central Library. She also highlighted the article about her reelection as Chair in *Business First*.

Trustee Bartholomew joined the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Chair Johnson welcomed Trustee Bartholomew to the Board, noting she had been appointed by the Erie County Legislature at its March 9 meeting. Trustees Amodeo and Candelario were also reappointed for new terms.

Trustee Craik joined the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Chair Johnson noted per B&ECPL Bylaws, all members of the Governance Committee must qualify as Independent Trustees, and such independence must be documented in the Board minutes. Trustees Bedenko, Craik, El-Behairy, and Gist each verbally confirmed they are Independent Trustees as defined in the Bylaws and had no circumstances which would disqualify them from serving on the Governance Committee. Trustee Kelly will be asked to confirm at the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met on March 9, 2023. A copy of the written report was included in the Board packet. Trustee El-Behairy summarized the meeting. Trustee T. Johnson moved to have the written report entered into the Minutes, Trustee Bucki made a second, and this was approved unanimously.

Present: Executive Committee Chair Kimberly Johnson, Vice Chair Carima El-Behairy, and members Elaine Panty and Christopher Sasiadek. Member Lucy Candelario attended the meeting remotely as a non-voting participant. Also present were Director John Spears, Chief Financial Officer Ken Stone, Chief Operating Officer Jeannine Doyle, and Assistant to the Director Erin Vest.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:04 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed agenda for the March 16, 2023 B&ECPL Board of Trustees meeting. One item on the draft agenda was removed and would be added to a future agenda.

For her report, Chair Johnson recounted her experience at Library Advocacy Day in Albany on February 28. A group of 15 representatives from the B&ECPL attended the event, including members of the System Board, contracting library trustees, and staff representing libraries throughout the System. Meetings were held with all 13 legislators that represent B&ECPL libraries or their staff. She cited the meeting with Assemblymember Monica Wallace as being particularly productive, but felt all the meetings were positive. Director Spears noted it was also great for staff to get to know the members of the Board.

CFO Stone stated there would be a yearend monthly financial report for 2022 in this month's Board packet. He noted the Library ended the year within budget, with revenue slightly over and expense well under.

Director Spears conveyed the safety concerns at the Central Library have gotten worse since the discussion at the February Board Meeting. There have been several severe

incidents, and security and public services staff are being stretched to their limits. He stated they could no longer guarantee a safe space after 3:00 p.m. Therefore, the Central Library will be closing at 3:00 p.m. on weekdays starting March 10. A press release was set to go out that evening. He noted this is a temporary measure until a permanent plan is in place to address the current issues. Trustee El-Behairy asked how this would affect programming. Director Spears stated meeting room use and appointment-based programs would be able to continue during the closed time, with individuals being let into the building to attend specific events. Tenants will also be able to continue meeting with clients. Staff schedules will remain largely unchanged to help accommodate this. He recognized there will be some disruption, but they are hoping to minimize any negative impact on the Library's partners.

He noted this decision was made the day before in consultation with administrative and security staff; all agreed it was necessary. He had been in contact with Chair Johnson about the decision and had also informed the Erie County Executive's Office. The latter was initially opposed to the decision, but came to understand the situation after a meeting with Director Spears and COO Doyle. They will be offering assistance, including potential procurement of metal detectors using their own budget. Another meeting is being scheduled with the County Executive, Mayor, Erie County Sheriff, and Chief of Police.

Director Spears conveyed they are currently working to get a plan in place for reinstating the hours. He had a meeting with Pastor Giles about bringing the Peacemakers to the Central Library as well as providing training for staff. He noted the meeting was very positive, as Pastor Giles recognized that we ultimately want teens in the library, not moved along. We are hoping to get a contract in place quickly using emergency procurement. Another measure being considered is closing one entrance so staff can better observe and control who enters and exits.

Trustee Candelario asked what preparation had been done for communicating this to the press. Director Spears stated a media release has been prepared, and social media posts, email, and verbal communication with Central patrons will also be used. Trustee Candelario expressed her concern that the media will frame this as taking action against urban teens. Director Spears stated the media release notes these issues go beyond the library and expresses the hope that we will be part of a community solution. He said he is prepared to discuss how we are working to ensure a safe space for all library users, including programs and services for teens.

Trustee Sasiadek asked what teens will be told tomorrow when they arrive at the doors. Director Spears said they will be informed the library is closed. Trustee Sasiadek noted this could be a time to engage in conversation or to offer appointments for one-on-one programs. Director Spears stated they have to get more teen programs in place as part of the solution.

Chair Johnson asked how long the issues have been going on. Director Spears stated it had been 2-3 months since the problems significantly escalated. Trustee Panty expressed her concern that the reduced hours would cause us to lose patrons. Director

Spears noted they have already lost patrons due to the incidents; when he was manning the entrances at the beginning of the Zero Tolerance Policy implementation, multiple patrons leaving the building told him they would never come back. He noted this is not the perfect answer, but it is the least wrong answer.

Trustee Sasiadek expressed his reluctance to pursue metal detectors. He felt they would permanently make the space less inviting. COO Doyle conveyed the type of metal detector they are looking into is similar to the existing RFID gates. Patrons would not need to remove items of clothing, put their bags on a conveyor belt, or even enter single file; they would only be pulled to the side if the machine spots something suspicious. She stated she had previously been opposed to metal detectors for similar reasons, but felt these were worth pursuing. One thing they would need to consider is having enough staff to monitor the screens.

Trustee Candelario asked about the timeframe for returning to regular hours. Director Spears stated they will need to have additional services in place before reopening. He is optimistic about pursuing a contract with the Peacemakers and hopes they can come to an agreement within a few weeks. He also noted they would be taking this time to establish a more definitive timeline on medium- to long-term solutions, such as creating a teen space.

Following this discussion, Director Spears noted the March 16 Board Meeting was scheduled for 4:00 p.m., which will be after the library closes. The Executive Committee agreed to still hold the meeting at the Central Library. Members of the public who wish to attend will be allowed to enter the building. In mentioning the possibility of holding the meeting at another location, Trustee El-Beahiry suggested reestablishing a regular schedule of holding Board meetings at other libraries in the System. Chair Johnson stated this could be discussed.

Director Spears next noted the Erie County Executive's State of the County is scheduled for April 13 at 4:00 p.m. in the Central Library's auditorium. Chair Johnson suggested moving that day's Executive Committee to 3:00 p.m. The Committee agreed.

Trustee El-Beahiry stated there would be a report from the Library Foundation at the March 16 meeting. Chair Johnson did not know if there would be a report from ACT. Trustee El-Beahiry asked about their next workshop, mentioning the requirement for trustees to complete training. Director Spears said he would follow-up. He also noted trustee training could be incorporated into future Board meetings. Nothing needed to be added under Unfinished Business or New Business.

With no further business to discuss, the Executive Committee meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. on a motion by Trustee El-Beahiry and a second by Trustee Panty.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Chief Financial Officer Ken Stone reported the Library ended 2022 over for revenue and under for expense. There were savings in personnel lines, and utility prices moderated towards the end of the year.

He also relayed the New York State Assembly and Senate both released their one-house budget bills. Both include increases to library operating aid and construction aid. He stated now is the time to contact legislators and thank them for their support. He noted Library Advocacy Day was a positive experience, and legislators especially notice when trustees are involved.

Trustee T. Johnson asked for the balance of the Library's rainy day fund. CFO Stone stated there was \$3.25 million in the main contingency fund as well as approximately \$346,000 designated for equipment and technology replacement. He noted the latter fund would need replenishment soon.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Director Spears started by relaying a timeline of events regarding the situation at the Central Library. He stated conversations had begun with relevant organizations prior to the discussion at the February Board meeting. Despite the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Policy, incidents continued to happen in the afterschool hours and began to escalate. At the Managers-Directors Meeting on March 8, he met with System administration to discuss closing at 3:00 p.m. due to safety concerns. The decision was unanimous. He was also in contact with Chair Johnson about the decision. Staff were informed that day as well as the County Executive's Office. The next day, Director Spears informed the Executive Committee of the decision to curtail hours. Following that discussion, a message was sent to the full Board of Trustees. A media release was sent out later that night, and the new hours were enacted on Friday, March 10. He noted the reaction from patrons on Friday was sad, but understanding; many said thank you.

Director Spears reported he had met with representatives from the Erie County Executive's Office, the Sheriff's Department, and the Peacemakers the same week. He noted the County had put them in contact with a company that installs metal detectors; they will be having an onsite meeting with the company next week about potentially installing metal detectors at all three entrances. He noted changes in technology make the detectors much less intrusive to visitors.

Director Spears announced the B&ECPL had signed a contract with the Peacemakers earlier that day on an emergency basis through the end of the school year. Erie County has generously offered to pay. The contract will include one supervisor and 3-4 staff from the Peacemakers onsite 2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Friday. One staff member will be stationed outside, two will be inside the library, and one will be arranging activities. He noted the activities were an important part of responding as a library, not seeking to push the teens along. An orientation

session is scheduled with the Peacemakers for March 23, and they will be meeting with relevant staff. Once administration is comfortable that everything is in place, the library will do a "soft opening" to restore the hours. One operational change that will be implemented at the same time is closing the Ellicott Street entrance after 3:00 p.m. and only using the Washington Street entrance. This will allow for better monitoring of who is coming and going. Following the soft opening, an announcement will be made to the media.

Trustee Gist expressed his disappointment that the Board was not told sooner about the change in hours, noting he had first read it in the paper.

Trustee T. Johnson asked if any other libraries in Buffalo were experiencing the same challenges. Director Spears said they were not. Trustee T. Johnson asked for examples of incidents. Director Spears stated minor incidents included verbal harassment of staff and patrons. Major incidents included brawls of 20-30 people. Trustee T. Johnson asked if those participating were banned from the library and for how long. Director Spears noted for some incidents, security prioritized just getting the groups outside. If they were able to identify an individual involved in an altercation, there is a multilevel process in place for imposing a long-term ban, usually for three months, six months, or a year based on severity. Trustee Gist asked if staff members had been hurt. Director Spears stated they had, though no serious injuries. Trustee T. Johnson asked if there were repeat offenders. Director Spears stated in many cases they didn't know, and they hoped the Peacemakers would be able to help with that. Trustee Gist asked if the bus stop was a contributing factor, and Director Spears opined that it was. Trustee Gist stated the Ellicott Street entrance should have been closed as the next step before considering shortening hours.

Trustee Craik asked for more information on the Peacemakers. Director Spears stated they are a community-based restorative justice organization that works with youth to provide mentorship and arrange constructive cooperative activities to redirect negative behavior. They have a great track record working with community organizations, including their previous tenure at the Central Library. Trustee Gist stated their previous contract should not have ended. Director Spears noted he is looking to move forward, not dwell on the past.

Trustee Gist opined the reduction in hours would dissuade the public from visiting the Central Library, and our reputation would not recover even when hours are restored. Director Spears noted we had already lost patrons due to the unsafe atmosphere. He stated the decision was not taken lightly; with the way things were escalating, something worse could have happened if they did not take this step back to assess and get new safety measures in place.

Chair Johnson stated she felt the Library could create something positive out of this situation. The community now recognizes the issues we are facing and are looking for solutions together. We want the teens and other patrons to come back to the library when hours are restored and to fully buy in to a new vision for the future. Trustee Panty agreed, stating if we do this right, we can use our success to promote the Library. Director Spears stated he is looking forward to bringing everyone back as long as the security, programs, and partners are in place to ensure success. Speaking to Trustee Gist's previous point, he acknowledged the process moved extremely quickly and the Board was notified as things were already in motion. That said, the decision was made for safety, and once it was determined the library was unsafe, he could not in good conscience delay a response until after the next Board meeting.

Trustee Bartholomew asked what the media strategy will be going forward, noting the press may not be as interested in things going well. Director Spears first thanked Chief Operating Officer Jeannine Doyle and Assistant Deputy Directors Joy Testa Cinquino, Dorinda Darden, and Samantha Purpora for their incredible work during this time. They have been meeting every day to coordinate the current response with staff, partners, and the media as well as plan for the return to normal hours. He stated many contacts in the media asked for follow-up to their initial stories, and he felt it was a natural progression of their narratives. The focus has been on what is happening with these teens, and the follow-up story is what the Library is doing to meet their needs.

ADD Testa Cinquino stated the media has been understanding and accurate in their portrayal of the current situation. She also remarked Director Spears is great at crisis communication, knowing exactly what to say in his interviews. She noted a soft return to normal hours would give some breathing room before a formal media announcement, as she anticipates all outlets will want to be onsite to do follow-up stories. Trustee Sasisadek stated staff should be encouraged to share positive outcomes so that the Library is able to provide examples for follow-up stories. Trustee El-Beairy asked if there is a particular friend of the Library in the media. ADD Testa Cinquino stated there is a lot of support for the Library from all outlets. There are many new people in the local media, which can be challenging, but overall our relationships are very positive. Trustee El-Beairy thanked Director Spears and the administrative team for their work.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
February 2023**

We Are Beautiful: An Evolution of Black Dolls - On February 2, the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library hosted the special opening presentation for the *We*

Are Beautiful: An Evolution of Black Dolls exhibit presented by Erie County Legislature Chairwoman April N.M. Baskin. The ceremony featured local author of the American Girl Addy series Connie Porter, as well as remarks from Chairwoman Baskin and the exhibit's collector and curator Lisa Jacobs-Watson. The exhibit runs through April 1.

Black History Month at Central - The Central Library celebrated Black History Month with exhibits offered through the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor and the Buffalo African American Museum, featuring information from many of the Michigan Avenue institutions and highlighting their impact on local African American history, art, and culture. A large crowd attended a special Black History Month concert by The Carol McLaughlin Big Band affiliated with the Colored Musicians Club on February 16. This concert was possible due to special arrangement with the Music Performance Trust Fund and the Buffalo Musicians' Association Local 92.

Black History Month Lectures - Information Services and Outreach Manager **Daniel Caufield** coordinated a Friday speaker series titled *Together as One: Celebrating Black History in Western New York* with Clifford Bell, Chair of the Buffalo African American Museum, which was held in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library. The series began on February 3 with Clifford Bell discussing the exhibit on display at the Central Library and the many notable individuals who stood out in Buffalo's African American community. On February 10, Lillie Wiley Upshaw, Chair of the Buffalo Niagara Freedom Station Coalition, spoke about the influence of the Michigan Street Baptist Church and the Nash House Museum. On February 17, George Scott, President of the Colored Musicians Club, spoke of the power and influence the group had on music locally and national. The series concluded on February 24, with local historian, actress, and community leader Mary Craig, who spoke about Western New York's role in the Underground Railroad and the work done at the African American Cultural Center to preserve history and voices from the past. Drummers from the African American Cultural Center also provided a performance. The Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library also hosted a weekly Black History Month lecture series sponsored by the Michigan Street African American Heritage Corridor Commission on Tuesday evenings in the Dr. Eva M. Doyle Auditorium. The series featured presentations from the Colored Musicians Club; WUFO's Sheila Brown and Senior DJ Lee Pettigrew; Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold; and Lillie Wiley-Upshaw, Rachel Henderson, and Sharon Holley.

Copernicus' 550th Birthday Celebration - A celebration of Nicolas Copernicus' 550th Birthday was organized by the Permanent Chair of Polish Culture at Canisius College, Mary Lou Wyrobek in partnership with the Special Collections Department and Community Engagement Manager **Anne Conable**. The event took place in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on February 5. Library Director **John Spears** provided a welcome, and Rare Book Curator **Amy Pickard** spoke about the Library's 1543 copy of *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* and how the B&ECPL came to own this significant rare book along with the rest of the Milestones of Science Collection. To conclude the program, Mary Lou Wyrobek gave a presentation about Copernicus' life and his significance. The Library's copy of *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* was on display in the Grosvenor Room for this event and throughout the month of February.

CPR Kits in Libraries – A media event on February 17 organized by Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** announced a new collaboration to help bring awareness to CPR training and access to *CPR Kits* in all 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Libraries. The at-home training kits will be in libraries in early March for patrons to check out. They were donated by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York, the Buffalo Bills Foundation, Lawley Insurance, and the American Heart Association.

Dare to Repair – The Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library hosted the Tool Library’s Dare to Repair workshop on February 18. The event assisted more than 47 people, with 29 items successfully repaired, 335 lbs of potential waste diverted from local landfills, and \$2,208 saved on replacement costs. Pictures from the event can be found here:

www.flickr.com/photos/thetoollibrary/sets/72177720306131902/.

Four Centuries of Bookbinding: The Jordan Collection Exhibit - The *Four Centuries of Bookbinding: The Jordan Collection* exhibit curated by **Amy Pickard** and designed by Graphics team **Dawn Stanton** and **Darlene Pennachi** opened in the Grosvenor Rare Book Display Room at the Central Library on February 17. This exhibit showcases a father and son history of bookbinding collection that the B&ECPL acquired in 2020. The father, Dr. Fred A. Jordan II [1906-1974], was an ophthalmologist who studied and collected books for their bindings. The son, Fred A. Jordan III, is a learned and accomplished hand bookbinder who has restored and rebound rare books for many institutions including the B&ECPL, Rochester Institute of Technology, Hamilton College, and others. The collection represents bindings from the Renaissance, through the Arts & Craft and Art Nouveau movements, and into the mid-twentieth century.

1. Public Services

Central Library:

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Display - An interactive display was featured in the Kids’ Space where children could share their dreams in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Genealogy Presentations – Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** provided an online demonstration of the library’s digital collections to a group of genealogists on February 8. On February 9, she presented *Polonia in the Grosvenor Room* about the Grosvenor Room’s genealogical resources of interest to those of Polish heritage at a meeting of the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State.

Health and Wellness - **Sophia Charles**, Graduate Fellow with the New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program, coordinated with Jericho Road to provide information and resources on maintaining controlled blood pressure on February 7. A community health worker took the blood pressure of patrons who stopped by the table and discussed the results, with follow-up information provided. In addition, Sophia coordinated the *Wellness @ Central* event on February 19. At the event, organizations connected with patrons about literacy, mental wellness, food access, housing, financial assistance, medical insurance, physical health, and substance use and addiction.

Income Tax Assistance – The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance has partnered with the B&ECPL to provide free one-on-one income tax assistance to patrons on Thursdays from February to April in the TechKnow Lab at the Central Library.

Just Buffalo Literary Center Writing Workshop - Information Services and Outreach Librarian **Maria Lowe** coordinated with Robin Jordan who runs the youth writing center at Just Buffalo Literary Center to provide a *Writing Workshop* at the Central Library on February 27 as an afterschool program. Each participant received an envelope of images and used those to create a zine.

Launch Pad Makerspace – Senior Library Clerk **Sarah Barry** hosted a *Valentine's Day Necklace Making* program on February 13, providing a crafting activity for walk-in patrons of all ages. Library Technology Clerk **Amanda Brown**, in collaboration with Grassroots Gardens Buffalo, hosted a *Cold Sowing* workshop on February 18. Participants were taught the best way to go about planning and planting seeds during the cold months in Buffalo.

Tours & Class Visits - Children's Services and Outreach staff welcomed a third grade class from Buffalo Public School # 79 Pfc. William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence on February 1 for a tour of the library, a *B is for Book Scavenger Hunt*, and a silhouette craft based on the work of African American artist Kara Walker. A Pre-K and kindergarten class from BPS #32 Bennett Park Montessori visited on February 10. **Susan Buttaccio** and **Amy Pickard** provided a tour to students and teachers from North Collins High School on February 17, highlighting Special Collections and the closed stacks, with a special focus on the Mark Twain Room. On February 25, Rare Book and Map Librarian **Charles Alaimo** provided the first monthly tour of the Grosvenor Room. Patrons viewed the Mark Twain Room, the Jordan Collection of Fine Bindings, the *B is for Book* exhibit, Grosvenor Room displays, and various materials in the Grosvenor Room.

Buffalo Branches:

Program Highlights – The Buffalo Branches all hosted one-on-one technology trainings, take and make crafts, adult craft hours, and children's craft hours. Storytimes were held at the Elaine M. Panty and North Park Branch Libraries. The Dudley Branch Library hosted a Valentine's Day Party. The Stitch Circle group at the East Clinton Branch Library expanded its meetings to twice a month to accommodate more patron participation. The Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library hosted two virtual Manga Club meetings. The North Park Branch Library hosted a Crochet Club meeting and craft.

Outreach:

Events – Children's Services and Outreach Librarians **Erin Burke** and **Jennifer Lelinski** provided a music-related craft and library information for children and their caregivers at the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's *BPO Little Kids* event on February 11. Information Services and Outreach Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** was a speaker at a

Starting & Managing Your Business workshop organized by SCORE Buffalo Niagara and held at the Calspan Building Complex in Cheektowaga on February 25. Jacob’s presentation introduced attendees from a wide range of industries to free library resources that help entrepreneurs start and run their business.

Mobiles – Thirty-two Dinosaur Terrariums were handed out, and 1,500 newsletters for kids and families were distributed at school stops throughout the month. Bookmobile Manager **Julia Verbanic** conducted three storytimes at UB Child Care Center; 40 children attended.

Library by Mail – All Library by Mail patrons enjoyed getting special Valentine’s Day cards in their packages this month. The department received many notes and phone calls in appreciation for the special attention.

B is for Book Exhibit:

	Number of Visitors		
	Month	YTD	From Opening (9/2020 to Present)
Non Tour-Related	2,222	4,972	53,555
Tour/Program	88	252	2,778
TOTAL <i>B is for Book</i>	2,310	5,224	56,333

2. Collection Development

Digital Collections - **Susan Buttaccio** added items to the Rich Newberg Reports Collection on the Library’s digital collection platform, including *The Morning After: The Demise of the Courier Express*. Shakespeare’s First Folio was uploaded to the library’s digital collection. The first edition Folio was digitized for inclusion in an upcoming consortium project celebrating the 400th anniversary of its publication.

Vinyl LP Collection Display – Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** assembled a new display in the Grosvenor Room for selections from the Vinyl LP collection. The first selection included jazz albums by black artists for Black History Month and has already generated some interest from patrons. The display will rotate every few weeks.

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,045	5,054	213	620	538,949
Young Adult Print	802	1,593	150	279	79,847
Adult Print	3,619	6,976	727	1,630	1,797,962
Media	2,178	5,584	200	570	565,061
Other*	1,879	3,711	19	85	171,240
Subtotal	10,523	22,918	1,309	3,184	3,153,059

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,345	7,168	1,407	2,788	106,074
eAudiobooks	3,935	7,492	323	632	68,367
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4,513
Subtotal	8,280	14,660	1,730	3,420	178,954

* 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	18,803	37,578	3,039	6,604	3,332,013

3. Funding/Fundraising

Funding:

Library Advocacy Day - Despite forecasts of heavy snow (which did not materialize), B&ECPL representatives visited our state legislators and/or their staff in their Albany offices for the first time since the pandemic on February 28. B&ECPL representatives split into three groups led by Board Chair Kimberly Johnson, Vice Chair Carima El-Beahry, and Director **John Spears** to ensure visits to each legislator’s office. Contracting Library Trustees Karen Bordonaro (City of Tonawanda) and Marilyn Feuerstein (Amherst) joined staff members **Judy Fachko** (HR), **Maureen Germaine** (Development & Communications), **Bridgette Heintz** (Grand Island), **Chelsey Lonberger** (Lackawanna), **Stephanie Molnar** (Lake Shore), **Jennifer Page** (Angola), **Jacob Rachwal** (Information Services & Outreach), **Kristine Sutton** (Newstead), and Chief Financial Officer **Ken Stone** as members of the three teams. Reactions to the visits were positive, with numerous expressions of support for our funding requests to improve both operating and construction aid.

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 - February 28, 2023	\$42,317.29

Grant Submitted in February - The Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grant would increase the Bookmobile’s graphic novel collection and provide programming (\$4,000).

Fundraising Acknowledgements - A thank you was sent January 30 to over 260 patrons who supported the *Bucks for Books* campaign in 2022. Another thank you was sent February 14 to over 600 donors who gave to the Library’s 2022 *Year End Appeal*.

4. Facilities

Crane Branch Library - Construction is moving towards completion. Interior reconstruction/renovation work is proceeding well, with an estimated turnover date in May. Library staff would then be allowed to move library materials back into the

building and set up for operation. The building could be reopened to the public as early as late May.

5. Staff Development

Leadership Training – B&ECPL System Administration took part in *Leadership Begins with YOU: Developing Your Credibility as a Leader*, presented by Frank Ciccio of Illuminare Group on February 3. This is the first part of a three-part leadership program for administrative staff.

JCLC Conference – Information Services and Outreach Librarian **Kuniko Simon** attended the Joint Council of Librarians of Color Conference in St. Pete’s Beach, FL from February 8 – 12. She attended programs on publishing standards, peer advocacy, culturally-specific programming, staff development, community engagement, patron-driven design, and mentorship, as well as the pre-conference program *Outreach Librarianship: A Valuable Key to Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Services*.

Webinars – Human Resources purchased the PLA webinar *Recruiting and Supporting Employees Who Are Neurodivergent* for nine managers throughout the B&ECPL System; the live program was February 28. Staff also attended other pertinent webinars throughout February, including *Basic Book Repair for Libraries* (presented by CLRC), *Health Insurance Literacy for Older Adults* (presented by Niche Academy), and *Racial Justice and Community Healing through Cultural Heritage Preservation* (presented by Buffalo State University).

6. Communications

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Live TV interviews	Black doll exhibit @ the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library	February 2, WGRZ TV, Channel 2
Media coverage, photos and interview during opening event	Black doll exhibit @ the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library	February 2, Buffalo Challenger, WKBW TV Channel 7
Radio interview	Black doll exhibit @ the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library	February 7, WBLK Radio
Media event, media release	CPR Kits coming to all 37 libraries	February 16, WKBW TV Channel 7, WIVB TV Channel 4, Spectrum News, Buffalo Bills YouTube, also covered by WYRK Radio, The Buffalo News, Bee Publications
Taped TV interview with Library Director John Spears	Children’s programs and things to do during winter break from school	Week of February 20, WKBW TV, Channel 7
Taped TV interviews	Black doll exhibit @ the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library	February 27, Spectrum News

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	105	205	1,952	3,695	67	11,608
Flickr	-	-	7,820	12,912	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,136	4,541	N/A	N/A
Instagram	21	47	3,8834	4,435	(91)	4,699
Pinterest	45	82	54	126	(1)	2,115
Podcast ²	2	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TikTok	-	-	102	230	37	432
Twitter	64	127	658	998	14	11,034
YouTube	6	21	1,506	2,746	13	494
Total	243	486	18,111	29,683	39	30,442

¹Google Ads is provided to the Library through a grant. Monthly activity based on public clicks and verified calls from the Library's online advertisement.

²Podcast public activity measurement cannot be tracked accurately because it is available through multiple applications.

7. Partnerships

May 14th Collecting Initiation - Susan Buttaccio presented to members of the *May 14th Collecting Initiative* at a virtual meeting held on February 9. She discussed the efforts being made by the B&ECPL to design and launch an *Oral History Project* to preserve and share the stories of the people and community affected by the tragic May 14, 2022 mass shooting in an effort to create a historical record for current and future generations.

Challenger Digitization - Charles Alaimo worked with Heather Gring, Archivist for the Burchfield Penney Art Center, to identify editions of the Buffalo Challenger from the Library’s collection to add to a digitization project in partnership with Buffalo State University and the Western New York Library Resources Council. Once digitized, the Challenger will be available on the New York State Historic Newspaper site.

Meetings - B&ECPL staff were also in contact or attended meetings with representatives of the following organizations:

- Buffalo Bills Foundation
- The Buffalo History Museum
- Buffalo Toronto Public Media
- Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York
- International Institute of Buffalo
- Polish Arts Club of Buffalo
- Lawley Insurance
- WNYLRC Committees
- YMCA Buffalo Niagara

8. Planning for the Future

Family History Day - Susan Buttaccio and **Anne Conable** are developing an annual *Family History Day* program. Plans include talks by local genealogists, tabling with local cultural institutions with genealogy collections, and other activities to highlight the Library’s Genealogy Collection and foster partnerships with institutions with similar collections.

Bike Workshops - In collaboration with Adam Ianni, the Community Workshop Director at GObike Buffalo, Launch Pad Makerspace Manager **Jordan Smith** organized and scheduled a series of free community flat fixing and bike adjustment workshops to take place at the Central Library on May 19 and June 16, with a third potential date in July depending on funding availability.

Spirit of Buffalo - All are invited to the unveiling and dedication ceremony on Wednesday, March 15 at 1:00 p.m. for the *Spirit of Buffalo*, a new mural hanging at the Ellicott Street entrance of the Central Library. The mural was gifted to the library by the Polish Arts Club of Buffalo.

9. Director Activities

**Meetings/Events Attended by Director
January 2023**

Date	Meeting/Event
February 1, 2023	Media Event - <i>Introducing Together as One: A Celebration of Black History</i> at the Central Library
February 1, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
February 2, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Erie County Cultural Collaborative Group
February 2, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden, Samantha Purpora
February 2, 2023	Media Event - <i>We Are Beautiful: An Evolution of Black Dolls</i> Exhibit Opening at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library
February 3, 2023	Virtual Meeting - ErieNet Executive Director Interview
February 3, 2023	Training - Leadership Begins With You
February 5, 2023	Reception/Program - 550 th Birthday of Nicholaus Copernicus
February 6, 2023	Meeting - Judy Fachko, Jeannine Doyle
February 6, 2023	Meeting - Michelle Parker, Hamburg Public Library Board of Trustees
February 6, 2023	Meeting - Administrative Team
February 6, 2023	Meeting - Judy Fachko, Dorinda Darden, Linda Rizzo
February 7, 2023	Meeting - Erie County Sheriff's Office
February 7, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
February 7, 2023	Meeting - Ken Stone
February 8, 2023	Virtual Meeting - B&ECPL Managers/Directors
February 8, 2023	Meeting - Jeannine Doyle, Dorinda Darden
February 8, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
February 9, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden, Samantha Purpora
February 9, 2023	Virtual Meeting - ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom
February 9, 2023	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees Executive Committee
February 13, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

February 13, 2023	Meeting - Evviva Lajoie, University at Buffalo & Charles Lyons, Buffalo State
February 13, 2023	Meeting - Jeannine Doyle, Dorinda Darden
February 14, 2023	Meeting - Central Library Security Updates
February 14, 2023	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 14, 2023	Virtual Meeting - WNYLRC Strategic Planning Committee
February 14, 2023	Meeting - Ken Stone
February 15, 2023	Virtual Meeting - NYLA Legislative Committee
February 15, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
February 15, 2023	Coverage - Ellicott Street Entrance
February 16, 2023	Virtual Meeting - MetLib Standing Committee
February 16, 2023	Media Event - Announcing CPR Kits in B&ECPL Libraries
February 16, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden, Samantha Purpora
February 16, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System Directors
February 15, 2023	Coverage - Ellicott Street Entrance
February 16, 2023	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
February 17, 2023	Meeting - ErieNet Executive Director Interviews
February 17, 2023	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 15, 2023	Coverage - Ellicott Street Entrance
February 21, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
February 21, 2023	Meeting - ErieNet Board of Directors
February 21, 2023	Meeting - Ken Stone
February 22, 2023	Meeting - Administrative Team
February 22, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
February 23, 2023	Virtual Meeting - B&ECPL Library Advocacy Day Preparation
February 23, 2023	Event - Media, Racial Equity, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Roundtable at Buffalo History Museum
February 24, 2023	Interviews - Director of Security & Safety Management
February 24, 2023	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 27, 2023	Meeting - NYLA Library Advocacy Day Preparation Session
February 27, 2023	Meeting - NYLA Legislative Committee
February 27, 2023	Meeting - PULISDO
February 27, 2023	Meeting - NYALS
February 28, 2023	Meeting - NYS Senator Patrick Gallivan
February 28, 2023	Meeting - NYS Assemblymember Michael Norris
February 28, 2023	Meeting - NYS Assemblymember Jonathan Rivera
February 28, 2023	Meeting - NYS Assemblymember David DiPietro
February 28, 2023	Event - Library Advocacy Day Rally
February 28, 2023	Meeting - NYS Senator Timothy Kennedy

Appendices

A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	782	1,598	1,905	3,800

Children 5 and under	984	1,889	3,303	6,578
Children 6-11	2,775	4,117	4,080	7,109
Intergenerational/Combined	4,683	8,850	8,309	15,256
Teens	410	574	1,091	1,789
Regular Total	9,634	17,028	18,688	34,532
Regular Total	9,634	17,028	18,688	34,532
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	14	40	202	502
Children 5 and under	1	1	2	2
Children 6-11	2	2	23	23
Intergenerational/Combined	5	11	205	456
Teens	16	25	23	62
Live Virtual Total	38	79	455	1,045
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	6	7	266	371
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	2	225	225
Intergenerational/Combined	7	15	160	415
Recorded Virtual Total	15	24	651	1,011
Virtual Total	53	103	1,106	2,056
Grand Total	9,687	17,131	19,794	36,588

*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, wifi 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, wifi usage, and library visits can be found at www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2023-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail.

B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

Concord Public Library – submitted by Jennifer Morris, Director

New Kids Programs:

- **Homeschool Board Game Club** – This is a new weekly program for homeschool families interested in connecting with other homeschoolers in the area. We’ve taken advantage of Central’s Gaming Unplugged games as well as our own collection. It’s been quite popular, with families returning each week. It’s also been a fun way to promote other library resources the library can offer.
- **Building & Books** – This is an interactive monthly family story and craft program. Lowe’s is generously providing our library with their kids craft kits. Each month is a different theme based on the kit. The families commented that they enjoy doing the craft together with the kids and appreciated that we provided a free Saturday program they could all do together!

- **Story Yoga** – Another new monthly program offering! One of our staff who is also an elementary school teacher and teaches yoga came up with the idea. Our first program is on St. Patrick’s Day, with, of course, a St. Patrick’s Day theme – kids will learn about Ireland and St. Patrick's Day traditions through yoga poses.

Kids February Winter Break Activities:

- **Creative Writing for Kids with Eric Williams** - Local author Eric Williams shared his creative writing tips on how to put stories together. The program was well attended and the kids also loved hearing his funny stories – a very engaging program!
- **Dogsled STEM Challenge** – This was a fun interactive program where kids listened to the story of the famous Alaskan dogsled race and then complete a STEM challenge to build a dogsled and see who’s was the fastest. This program was well attended and everyone got to watch the “race” at the end of the program.

New Adult Programs:

- **Silent Book Club** – Silent Book Club is a global community of readers and book lovers with chapters around the world. At a Silent Book Club, there’s no assigned reading – that’s the silent part of the book club. You bring your own book and everyone reads together silently for an hour and then discuss the books after. Our library applied to be a local chapter in Springville – we meet at a local café once a month. It’s been very well attended so far – everyone really enjoys the dedicated reading time as well as being around other book lovers.
- **Monthly Sewing Classes** – Our library started offering monthly beginner sewing classes in December 2022 – each month is a different project. We’ve done pillows, quilt runners, and soup bowl cozies. We plan to offer hand sewing basics and mending and repairing classes in the coming months.

Community Events:

- **Earth Day** – In April, our library will be participating in our local Earth Day event for an afternoon of family friendly earth-centered activities.

Orchard Park Public Library – submitted by Peggy Errington, Director

Highlights of events and activities at the Orchard Park Library:

- Orchard Park Library teamed up with the American Heart Association to host a CPR class for teens.
- The Library welcomed Siberian Husky ambassadors from the Siberian Husky Club of the Niagara Frontier for a meet and greet in anticipation of the Iditarod Race.
- The Library collaborated with the NY State Department of Taxation for free e-file help weekly from February - April.
- The newly formed Dungeons and Dragons cohort has begun its first campaign.
- Mr. K’s Mobile Dome will visit the library for a mini-planetarium experience.

- The Library's Oculus Virtual Reality programs have grown in popularity. February featured a BOGO Virtual Pet experience and the immersive film *Henry*. The highlight for March is Beat Sabers!
- Children's Librarian **Kasey Mack** will travel to the Orchard Park Historical Society Jolls' House for a History Kids program exploring the museum's vintage toys.
- The In Good Health Series continues to draw an avid, loyal following. Topics include Heart Health (February), DIY Organic Clean Kits (March, and Yoga (April).
- The Orchard Park Library hosts book clubs for adults and teens and a comic book club for school age kids. Plans are progressing to implement a Book Buddies program, matching older and younger children for Read to Me opportunities.
- The Orchard Park Library Teen Advisory Group is very active. TAG members plan and execute teen-centric programming, most notably our very popular Escape Room experiences for families.
- Bi-monthly Teen Book Box programs continue to reach max capacity each session.
- Many teen books from the Blind Date with a Book display found matches.
- In support of Orchard Park's homeschoolers, the library hosts weekly chess club sessions and will institute monthly basic tech classes.
- Technology training classes offered from the Training Lab include Android Basics and iPhone/iPad Basics. Orchard Park also has frequently booked one-on-one tech training sessions with onsite staff.
- The Friends of the OP Library host the monthly 4th Tuesday Speaker Series: *European Immigration* at the turn of the century in March and *Our Changing Forests* presented by the NY State Dept. of Recreation & Historic Preservation in April.
- An Epic Trainings Babysitting certification course will be offered for teens in April.
- Ribbon cutting for the Orchard Park Library Seed Library is set for April 26. The Seed Library was accomplished with the support of local Master Gardeners, the Orchard Park Garden Club, and funds supplied by State Assemblymember Patrick Burke, who will be present at the ceremony.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation. Trustee El-Behairy reported the Library Foundation had met on March 15. They elected officers for the upcoming year: President Jack Connors, Vice President Carima El-Behairy, Treasurer Sharon Kelly, and Secretary Anne Leary. They also made changes to their bylaws, including updating the number of trustees. Finally, they appointed two new trustees: Heather Cruz and Samantha Nephew.

Agenda Item H – Report of the Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/ Contracting Library Trustee Report. ACT President Martha Buyer reported ACT held a very successful meeting and workshop on January 21. She thanked Director Spears and

ADD Darden for providing presentations. She noted ACT is currently seeking more active participation from its members. She noted it is a fascinating and sometimes challenging time to be a library trustee, and she and ACT are ready, willing, and able to support the B&ECPL however needed.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). None.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. Monica Boutin introduced herself as the liaison between the County Executive’s Office and the B&ECPL Board of Trustees. She stated she is happy to help as needed.

Odessa Hunter commented she is continuing to seek justice for an incident that occurred in October 2021. She stated she had not received a response to her letter to the Board dated January 19, 2023. Further, she commented she felt the adjusted hours were punitive and traumatic to minority teens. She asked for a response to her letter. Director Spears noted a packet with a copy of all previous communications to her was provided at her seat. She asked for a new response, and distributed copies of her January 19 letter to Board members.

Deb Mueller introduced herself as a Labor Relations Specialist for the CSEA union. She expressed her concerns about the recent safety issues at the Central Library as well as the reduction in hours. She acknowledged work hours were not cut for staff. She asked for an opportunity for an occupational health and safety specialist from the union to do an assessment of the building before a return to normal hours, noting she hoped to work collaboratively with the Library without the need to call the Public Employee Safety & Health Bureau.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K – New Business. Trustee Sasiadek asked as the fine free initiative approached one year from implementation whether the Library could provide statistics on circulation, overdue materials, revenue, etc. Director Spears stated he would obtain those statistics for the Board.

There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee T. Johnson with a second by Trustee Panty, the meeting was adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Moore
Secretary