

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

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, November 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  
Joel Moore, Esq., Secretary  
Michael Amodeo, Esq.  
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq.  
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS  
Lucy A. Candelario\*  
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.  
Elaine M. Panty  
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq.

\*Trustee Candelario attended the meeting remotely due to an extraordinary circumstance; pursuant to the B&ECPL Procedures for Trustee Videoconferencing, she was a full participant in the meeting.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum was present.

Trustee Moore arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. There were no changes to the proposed agenda.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of October 19, 2023. Trustee Bucki noticed several grammatical errors within the minutes. These were noted and amended accordingly. Trustee Sasiadek motioned to accept the minutes as amended, Trustee Panty seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair Johnson began her report by stating that she expects full participation from the Board of Trustees in regards to donating to the Library for the year-end appeal. She reminded the Board of their Trustee Education requirement and the options available to them, such as the Mid-Hudson webinars.

Chair Johnson stated that if anyone needs assistance with fulfilling the requirement they can reach out to Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich. Next, Chair Johnson raised the impending performance evaluation of Director John Spears. She announced that she is looking for volunteers to serve on a committee to evaluate Director Spears. Assistant Deputy Director, Human Resources, Judy Fachko provided copies of a Proposed Director Evaluation Timeline, a Performance Rating Scale, and a Performance Evaluation Form for the Board of Trustees to review. Chair Johnson stated that she would like to know who is interested in joining the committee by next month. Trustee Sasiadek asked how Chair Johnson would like people to notify her of their interest in volunteering. She stated that an e-mail or phone call would be sufficient. Trustee El-Beahiry asked if a volunteer could be excluded if they could not make every meeting on the Proposed Director Evaluation Timeline. Chair Johnson stated that the timeline is just in its draft stages. She also wanted to mention that if Trustees cannot be on the committee for one reason or another, they could still submit questions that they would like asked.

Chair Johnson reported that she attended *Indie Author Day* which took place on Saturday, November 4, at the downtown Central Library. She acknowledged that it was well attended and the Development and Communications Staff did a tremendous job setting it up. She followed this report by encouraging fellow Trustees to attend events at other libraries, whether it be in their own neighborhood or others.

Chair Johnson provided copies of Trustee Gist's article entitled "Drag Queen Dilemma" for the Board of Trustees. She went on to explain the content of the article, which consists of a part one and two. To summarize Chair Johnson, the Library's mission is to be inclusive to everyone, and it is troublesome having a Board Member who believes otherwise. Chair Johnson went on to say that she received comments from staff and the public in regards to the abovementioned article that expressed their unhappiness.

Trustee Kelly arrived at 4:14 p.m.

Director Spears provided an open letter to the Board of Trustees on behalf of the entire administrative team that read as follows:

As administrators at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, we are expected to continually demonstrate the values and principles that define our organization and public libraries. We are further tasked with ensuring that staff throughout this System conduct themselves in accordance with these in their interactions with the public and with each other. These values and principles include respect, access, and inclusion. Recent writings, comments, and actions of Trustee Frank Gist have run counter to these, and we wish to publicly state that his actions and statements are in direct opposition to the values we uphold, both as administrators and as an organization, and that we stand with those patrons, staff, and Board who have been hurt by him or have been led to question their place at the B&ECPL. While recent statements from Trustee Gist have denigrated Board members and members of the LGBTQ+

community, this behavior long predates the conversations brought about by a single Drag Queen Storytime. For years, members of administration and the Board-both past and present-have witnessed, and in some cases experienced, Trustee Gist's demeaning treatment. This has been especially true for women, who have suffered through behavior that should not have been and will no longer be tolerated. We expect better from each other and from staff throughout the B&ECPL, and it is long past time to expect better from a member of our Board.

After the open letter was read aloud, Chair Johnson stated that there are several seats up for expiration or that have been expired and that she has been in communication with the Mayor's office.

Before moving forward, Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer, Jeannine Purtell spoke in front of the Board of Trustees about her history at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and her 12 years of experience in various administrative positions. She went on to explain her concerns about interactions she has had with Trustee Gist during that time. She explained these occurrences in detail for the Board of Trustees. Chair Johnson thanked COO Purtell for sharing her story.

Trustee Bedenko asked if there are any other staff members that have something to add to this particular topic. Assistant Deputy Director Joy Testa Cinquino stated that the open letter provided earlier to the Board of Trustees speaks for administration as a whole. Assistant Deputy Director Samantha Purpora expressed that she manages a large number of staff members within the Library system and some have expressed their concerns regarding Trustee Gist. Chair Johnson stated that she does not want to diminish or overlook anyone's feelings in regards to this sensitive matter. Discussion ensued. Chair Johnson stated that she wants to write a letter to the Mayor in reference to this situation and that she wants to ask that the Board of Trustees sign it individually if they choose to do so. Trustee Kelly suggested that Chair Johnson also includes copies of Trustee Gist's "Drag Queen Dilemma" article when the letter is presented. Discussion ensued. Trustee Bedenko stated that he will volunteer to compose a draft of the letter to be presented to the Mayor. Further discussion ensued between Board Members in reference to this particular topic. Trustee Moore stated that since the Board has decided to take an action with presenting a letter to the Mayor, Trustee Gist should have the opportunity to speak on the article and his comments. Trustee Moore also asked if that opportunity has been offered to Trustee Gist. Chair Johnson stated that she intends to be transparent with Trustee Gist as much as possible. Further discussion ensued among Board Members. Trustee Bartholomew suggested that if individual Board Members want to have a conversation with Trustee Gist, they could choose to reach out on their own. Discussion ensued.

Trustee Sasiadek acknowledged that the Board of Trustees was considering writing a letter to the Mayor asking the Mayor to reappoint certain individuals to fill a vacancy and fill Trustee Gist's expired term. He brought up the Ethics Policy that binds the Board of Trustees and informed the Board of the process to remove a Board Member.

The Governance Committee would interview the person who is believed to have committed an infraction of the Ethics Policy and have them state their case. Discussion ensued among Board Members. It was decided that Trustee Bedenko will draft a letter for the Board Members to review and sign as individuals. Chair Johnson will present the letter to the Mayor.

#### Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met on November 8, 2023. A copy of the written report was included in the Board packet. Trustee El-Behairy summarized the minutes. There was a change from Saturday, November 5, to Saturday, November 4, and an additional typo. The minutes have been amended to reflect the changes. Discussion ensued about videoconferencing and open meetings law.

Present: Executive Committee Chair Kimberly Johnson, Vice Chair Carima El-Behairy, and members Lucy Candelario, Elaine Panty, and Christopher Sasiadek. Also present were Director John Spears, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik, and Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:08 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair Johnson commenced the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda for the B&ECPL Board of Trustees meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 16. Trustee El-Behairy stated that there will be a Report of the Foundation and it should be added to the agenda.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair Johnson communicated that she attended *Indie Author Day* which was held at the Central Library on Saturday, November 4. She said it was well attended and commended Joy Testa Cinquino, Melissa Burgess, and Darlene Pennachi for running the event. She said that the author that wrote *Discovering 111 Stories in Buffalo* was especially interesting and went into detail about the current and historical landmarks in the City of Buffalo. Chair Johnson also said that she is continuing to work on events surrounding *The Color Purple* and is in collaboration with other individuals in the local community. Chair Johnson also wanted to encourage fellow Trustees to donate to the Library this year.

Finally, Chair Johnson wanted to acknowledge that re-appointments to the Board were coming up and a few Trustees were already on expired terms. Discussion ensued about Board re-appointments and recent articles written by one of the Trustees on an expired term.

ADD-Controller Patronik informed the Executive Committee that the monthly financials are still on the right track and projected to trend positively. She also informed them that the Budget Hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, at 3:00 p.m. She asked them to let her know if they wanted to attend. The time of the

hearing could potentially change, however, and ADD-Controller Patronik will keep them apprised. She stated that she is going to focus on the 4.9% increase and how it will largely be used for contractual obligations in salaries and wages.

ADD-Controller Patronik wanted to propose that the Budget & Finance Committee hold meetings again. She stated that these meetings would promote more Board involvement in making decisions and keep everyone informed. She suggested having in-person, hybrid, or Zoom meetings either annually or quarterly and opened discussion for other times and suggestions. Discussion ensued. ADD-Controller Patronik stated that she will follow-up with an e-mail.

Director Spears introduced the proposed Resolution 2023-39 Amend Library Manager Wage/Benefits Package. He explained the proposed benefits and noted that the changes reflected those of other Erie County unions, such as the removal of the Sick Leave Incentive, allowing Flex-Time, and providing Sick Leave benefits to provisional employees immediately upon hire. Director Spears also introduced the proposed Resolution 2023-40 Amend Managerial/Confidential Benefits Package. He began by informing the Board that the Managerial/Confidential staff would be receiving a 5% cost-of-living increase to mirror what has been received by Managerial/Confidential staff in Erie County. He said this benefits package is also mirroring other Erie County unions and the benefits of Erie County Managerial/Confidential employees. He briefly summarized the changes in the proposed benefits.

There being no further business, Trustee Panty motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Sasiadek seconded. The meeting ended at 5:28 p.m.

#### Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. The monthly financial report for the year as of September 30, 2023, month-end close was included in the Board packet as an information item. Assistant Deputy Director-Controller Emily Patronik noted to the Board that there was an error on how the monthly financial report was printed. The revenue breakdown was supposed to be the first page followed by the expenditure page, but this was reversed. She also provided copies of the monthly financial report memo that was excluded from the Board packet. ADD-Controller Patronik thanked Chair Johnson, Trustee El-Behairy, Director Spears, and the rest of the administrative team for attending the Budget Hearing on Tuesday, November 14. She wanted to also thank Business Office Manager Tracy Palicki for her tremendous assistance with the budget process. ADD-Controller Patronik went on to detail how the Budget Hearing went. She stated that the response was positive. The next step is to wait until December for the County Legislature's vote on the budget. She ended her report by notifying the Board that she reached out to the Budget and Finance Committee to begin quarterly meetings beginning in 2024. She stated that these meetings can be done in-person or remotely.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Director Spears began his report by updating the Board of Trustees on the situation with the teens inside the library. He stated that

most incidents have been occurring outside of the library, however, there has been an uptick of teens inside the library. Director Spears detailed one incident that occurred outside the library where a patron was ambushed by several young adults and had his phone stolen. He went on to state that Security has had conversations with the Buffalo Police and the Peacemakers on how to handle future situations. He acknowledged that there is gang activity in downtown Buffalo which has led to unfortunate incidents in the area surrounding Central. Director Spears also stated that inside the library it is not as bad as last year, however, the Library cannot be responsible for all of downtown Buffalo and unfortunately this affects the users of the library. He wanted to commend the Security staff, Security Manager Kevin O'Neil, and COO Purtell for their work on keeping the library as safe as they can. He also wanted to commend the public service staff and how they handle these situations and acknowledge how taxing it is. Overall, the library has seen tremendous progress when it comes to safety and security. The Ellicott Street entrance is now reopened Monday through Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., which has helped patrons who have mobility issues. He also updated the Board of Trustees on the work for the children's area and the teen area.

Director Spears concluded his report by reminding the Board of the open letter read earlier. He stated that administration works hard to create an environment where the staff feels valued as individuals regardless of what their identity might be. The staff looks to administration to find solutions and right any wrongs. Administration looks to the Board of Trustees in the same way. He emphasized the seriousness of the situation with Trustee Gist. He also wanted to emphasize that this is one of the best Library Systems he has ever worked for and has never had an administration that came together so quickly on such a contentious issue.

### **B&ECPL Monthly Report October 2023**

On October 21, the Children's Programming Team hosted The Spooky Library Party! From the hours of 1:00 to 3:00 PM, families visited various stations located around the Central Library for trick-or-treating and different activities, such as a selfie station, making marbled paper, haunted walkthroughs, and book giveaways. At 4:00 PM, The Buffalo Science Museum presented their "Science Below Zero" event which also pulled in a large crowd of 110 people. Children's Librarian Jennifer Lelinski planned the event with the help of the Children's Department.



**Author Visit** – Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** coordinated a visit from author and researcher Mason Winfield for a talk entitled *City of Spirits: Famous Mediums, Psychological Research, and Two Centuries of Buffalo's Psychic History*. The event was held in the Auditorium at the Central Library on October 11.

**Banned Books Week** – In celebration of *Banned Books Week* (October 1-7), the newly formed System-wide Banned Books Committee, chaired by Collection Development Librarian **Michelle Snyder**, worked together to create displays and plan activities and events throughout the B&ECPL System. Events included a *Reading Incursion* on October 2 in the Reading Park; a *Discussion and Interview with Weston Brown* on October 2 at the Crane Branch Library; a *Messy Writing Meetup for Teens* in the Reading Park hosted by Just Buffalo Literary Center on October 3; a discussion on the history of banned books led by Burning Books bookstore at the North Park Branch Library on October 3; a presentation in the Ring of Knowledge in the Central Library by Jillian Yarnes and Luke Lippitt, Co-Founders of Students Protecting Education chapter started at the Orchard Park High School, and representatives from Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS) of Western New York on October 5; and a presentation entitled *Teaching Black History Through Banned Picture Books* by educator, researcher, and author Dawnavyn James at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on October 7.

**Digital Skills Workshop** – On October 18, System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** presented on B&ECPL's Health Literacy resources at the Literacy Buffalo Niagara's *Digital Skills Workshop* held in the Collections Gallery. This was a part of the B&ECPL's partnership with the Erie County Department of Health, Literacy Buffalo Niagara, Buffalo Center for Health Equity, and Erie Niagara Area Health Education Center's *Building Health Literacy through Action* initiative during *Health Literacy Month*.

**Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Career Fair** – In partnership with the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities and ACCES-VR, the *Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Career Fair* was held at the Central Library on October 19. Representatives from 30 businesses and organizations were on hand to share their resources with those in attendance.

**Retirement** - Rare Book Curator **Amy Pickard** retired at the end of October after employment with the library for 24 years. We thank her for her dedication to the Library's Rare Book Collection and the many thoughtful exhibits she created to share the Library's extensive holdings with the public.

## 1. Public Services

### Central Library:

**October 4, 11, 18, and 25** - Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** coordinated Wednesday's "Movie Matinee." Selected movies for October included *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) for Banned Books Week, *Divergent* (2014), *Insurgent* (2015), and *Allegiant* (2016).

**October 13**- Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** took part in the annual **Intersect Unconference**, hosted by the Downtown Central Library for the Western New York Library Resource Council, by offering walkthroughs and overviews of the Launch Pad to visiting librarians from across Western New York. Visitors were quite impressed by the various services offered by the Launch Pad, including the Seed Library, Recording Studios, and Conversion Station.

**Disability History Month** - In recognition of *Disability History Month*, **Jacob Rachwal** arranged for a representative of the National Federation of the Blind to share resources at the Central Library in a tabling event at the Central Library on October 10.

**Genealogy Training** – Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** presented *Breaking Old World* to genealogists at the Hamburg Senior Center on October 11. The class featured Grosvenor Room and online resources that help ascertain an immigrant's place of birth. **Rhonda** later presented a webinar called *My House Is Giving Me a Vibe* on October 18. Genealogists and historians learned how to research their house's history for paranormal events. The class explored the history of the Central Library's property to see if it aligned with staff and patron reported supernatural phenomena. Grosvenor Room and online resources were featured. **Rhonda** also taught the *My House Is Giving Me a Vibe* class at the West Seneca Senior Center on October 23 and the Amherst Senior Center on October 26. To end the month, she took part in a panel discussion on Wyoming County genealogy resources at the virtual *Western New York Genealogical Society Meeting* held on October 27.



**Technology Training** – In partnership with the Erie County Senior Services' University Express program, the TechKnow Lab hosted two technology training classes on *Android Basics* and *Libby* at the Central Library on October 6 and October 10, respectively.

**Tours and Visits** – Members of the Garret Club were provided with a tour of the Central Library on October 12 led by **Susan Buttaccio** and Community Engagement Manager **Anne Conable**. Rare Book Librarian **Charles Alaimo** curated a “show & tell” of some of the treasures of the Rare Book Collection. The presentation included a glimpse at Shakespeare's *First Folio*, Copernicus's first edition *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, items from the Roycroft collection, and more to members of the club. Special Collections Librarian Trainee **Isaac Johnson** gave a tour of the Grosvenor Room's resources to interested patrons on October 28.

### **Buffalo Branches:**

#### **Crane Programming Highlights:**

- On October 2, Crane hosted Weston Brown for *Banned Books Week*. He discussed the dangers and consequences of banning books with the 50 people in attendance.
- On October 16, Crane hosted author Julia Park Tracey to discuss her new book *The Bereaved*.
- On October 21, Crane hosted its first themed storytime for thirty attendees. Branch Manager Taylor Harding read *It's Fall* by Renee Kurilla and led them in painting pumpkins.
- On October 23, Crane hosted author Clinton Brown who discussed his book *Olmsted's Elmwood* for 50 participants with a portion of that discussion covering the history of the Crane Branch Library.
- Crane Library participated in the Elmwood Village Association Safe Trick-or-Treat event, with Librarian **Dan Lewandowski** and Library Technology Clerk **Hailey Oldham** assisting. They gave out stickers, crafts, candy, and pencils for over 100 people in attendance.
- Crane hosted **Assemblymember Jon Rivera** on October 30 for a storytime. Assemblymember Rivera invited María Pérez-Gómez to read from her book *The Magical Closet Mystery*. She gave out copies to those who attended the storytime, and attendees trick-or-treated around the library and made crafts upstairs. There were 35 in attendance.

#### **Dudley Programming Highlights:**

- Dudley Library hosted its yearly Halloween Party on October 28. 45 patrons got into the Halloween spirit with pumpkin painting, mini lantern crafts with tea lights, and candy.

#### **East Clinton Programming Highlights:**

- Sr. Pages **Heather Bak** and **Laura Wood** created five Take and Make crafts kits: 3D Bats, Haunted House plates, Hearse Skeletons, Witch Cauldrons, and Rainboo's.
- Branch Manager **Paul Guminski** and Sr. Page **Laura Wood** held a Pumpkin painting craft with 18 in attendance on October 25.
- **Paul** held three one-on-one events focusing on scanning, email setup, and Microsoft Word.
- East Clinton Staff had a table for Kaisertown's Beggar's night, passing out glow sticks, temporary tattoos, pencils, and Library information. Nearly 1,800 people stooped by!

**Coles Programming Highlights:**

- On October 31, the Coles Library held a Halloween Costume Party in collaboration with the A.D.A.C.C. Foundation. 56 Participants enjoyed candy, crafts, games, and giveaways while music and a Halloween movie played.

**Merriweather Programming Highlights:**

- On Saturday, October 28, the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library hosted a "Dolls & Society" exhibit provided by collector Lisa Jacobs-Watson. The program aimed to educate while also delighting participants with an expansive collection and Halloween activities.

**Gonzalez-Soto Programming Highlights:**

- The Isaías González-Soto Branch Library offers a weekly story time on Friday mornings and had 25 children and parents attend.
- The Isaías González-Soto Branch Library held a pumpkin hunt to celebrate Halloween all month; children were encouraged to find pumpkin bookmarks in the collection to pick a prize; the branch had 25 patrons participate. The Isaías González-Soto Branch Library also offers Lego Night every Monday evening from 5:00 to 7:00 PM; Legos are made available for young patrons to create designs that are then put on display at the circulation desk; the branch had 14 patrons participate.
- The Isaías González-Soto Branch Library hosted 21 kindergarteners from PS 3 on Friday, October 27; we read two stories, one in English one in Spanish, did a handprint monster craft for Halloween, and provided coloring pages.

**North Park Programming Highlights:**

- North Park Branch Library hosted a Tea & Tarot event with Kay from Green Apothecary.

**Outreach:**

Library on Wheels Bookmobile staff visited 30 stops and spent over 73 hours at events throughout Erie County. In addition to regularly scheduled stops, Bookmobile staff attended special events and continues to work with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority to expand the outreach of mobile library services throughout the city. On October 11, October 18, and October 25, staff attended community stops at Shaffer Village, LaSalle Courts, and Jasper Parrish BMHA apartments. Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** and Senior Page **Olivia Adams** attended the *Fall Into Reading Festival* held at Frontier Middle School in Hamburg on October 21. While most of the celebrations had been relocated inside the school, 117 patrons braved the cold, wind, and rain to visit the Bookmobile for more information about the library and library services, as well as reminisce about their own experiences and memories of using the Bookmobile in their childhood. **Andrew** and Library Assistant **Heather Leaderstorf** attended the *7th Annual Elmlawn Family Fall Fest* in Tonawanda's Elmlawn Memorial Park on October 22. In addition to the Bookmobile, the well-attended event featured hayrides, a "pumpkin patch," and many activities for kids and families. **Andrew** and **Olivia** attended the Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation *Halloween Bash* on October 28 at Lincoln Park. Hundreds of families across Erie County celebrated the day with hayrides, lawn games, trick-or-treating, and live entertainment.

TechKnow Lab Librarian **Brendan Chella** presented *Computer Basics* and *Internet Basics* technology classes at the Delavan Grider Community Center on October 3 and October 10, respectively.

System Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** participated in the *National Faith & Blue Weekend* event on October 7 at SUNY Erie's Burt Flickinger Athletic Center. She shared information about the services the library offers for all ages. The event was organized by Pastor Garney Davis, Jr. and included vendors and panel discussions aimed at strengthening bonds within Buffalo's diverse community. System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** and Central Children's Department Senior Page **Nancy Rypinski** provided tabling at the *Partial Eclipse* event held at the Buffalo Museum of Science on October 14. They also provided a thematic game titled *Pin the Moon on the Sun* and prizes for participants. Over 1,500 people came to the event, with over 800 visiting the Library's table.

**Jacob Rachwal** participated as a presenter at the *SCORE Starting and Managing Your Own Business Workshop* on October 14. **Jacob** shared library resources and services, such as the Data Axle database and our *Book a Librarian* program, with the participants. In addition, he issued library cards to new users during the workshop.

**Carol Kowalik-Happy** taught a class about *Library Resources for Entrepreneurs* on October 17 at the IBERO Business Center in Niagara Falls. The IBERO Business Center provides business training for minority and women-owned enterprises.

**Jacob Rachwal** participated in the *Community Wellness: Whole in One* event at the Johnnie B. Wiley Amateur Athletic Sports Pavilion in Buffalo on October 21.

**Chelsey Lonberger** and North Park Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** participated in the *North District Trick or Treat* event at the Northwest Buffalo Community Center on October 28. The event was sponsored by Buffalo Councilmember Joseph Golombek, Jr.

***B is for Book Exhibit:***

	Number of Visitors		
	Month	YTD	From Opening (9/2020 to Present)
Non Tour-Related	2,073	20,904	69,487
Tour/Program	6	720	3,246
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>21,624</b>	<b>72,733</b>

**2. Collection Development**

**Physical Collections:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	3,690	29,912	364	2,901	533,004
Young Adult Print	463	5,721	114	965	78,778
Adult Print	4,051	36,196	901	7,722	1,788,106
Media	2,043	26,774	176	2,592	545,255
Other*	1,749	18,303	150	668	172,431
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11,996</b>	<b>116,906</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>14,848</b>	<b>3,117,574</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

**Electronic Collections\*:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	6,343	40,189	1,355	13,578	118,298
eAudiobooks	6,089	57,855	388	3,391	68,863
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,243
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12,432</b>	<b>98,044</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>16,969</b>	<b>192,404</b>

\*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	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,428</b>	<b>214,950</b>	<b>3,448</b>	<b>31,817</b>	<b>3,309,978</b>

**3. Funding/Fundraising**

**Funding:**

**Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz released his 2024 Proposed Budget.** He is recommending a county funding increase of \$1,614,197 (4.9%) for libraries. The additional funding will help offset inflation related impacts on library operating costs, including contractually obligated labor costs and the escalating cost of supplies in this challenging fiscal environment.

County funding of \$29,675,375, combined with New York State operating aid funding of \$2,415,951, use of \$716,119 in Library fund balance, and \$298,139 in other library revenue, brings the Library’s 2024 proposed operating budget to \$33,105,584; a 5.4% increase over the 2023 County Adopted Budget. In addition to the operating budget, \$601,418 in estimated state aid is included in the Library Grants Budget.

Erie County’s 2024 Proposed Capital Budget supports improvements to the county owned downtown Central Library and to system related improvements, specifically:

- \$700,000 in bond funds for “Various Improvements & Upgrades”
- \$130,000 in “Pay As You Go” funds for a Shipping and Maintenance Vehicle Replacement

The next event in the budget review process will be the Library’s budget hearing before the Erie County Legislature’s Finance & Management/Budget Committee, scheduled for Tuesday, November 14. A public hearing/comment opportunity on the overall County Budget is expected to be scheduled later in November. The Legislature’s deliberations will continue until their vote on the proposed budget, scheduled for December 1. Should there be any vetoes, the Legislature has scheduled a veto override vote on December 15.

**Fundraising:**

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 - October 31, 2023	\$175,863.10

**Highlights:**

**Books, Bites & Banter** Happy Hour occurred on Wednesday, October 11. The event, sponsored by M&T Banks, welcomed 46 people for drinks and mingling, raising \$2,900 (net amount). Proceeds benefit the Library’s *Bucks for Books* campaign.

The Library has compiled 100 titles on an Amazon Wish List for the public to purchase and donate to the Library. Those titles will be added into the Library’s collection and made available for borrowing throughout the System. The Wish List can be found at: <https://a.co/cshoKQQ>.

Mass emails sent in October: Books, Bites & Banter Happy Hour – sent to over 2,100 donors.

**4. Facilities**

Bid specifications for the doors and wall upgrades in Central's Children's and Teen Areas have been provided to Erie County Purchasing to advertise.

Library and Erie County staff conducted a walk-through of the Central roof with potential architecture/engineering bidders for the design of the roof replacement.

Initial review comments from NYS Division of Library Development have been received for the most recent round of NYS Construction Aid applications. There is nothing of note to report at this time.

We have conducted a review of the Public Health Emergency Operation Plan. The Library will continue to stock a minimum of a six-month supply of all PPE and cleaning/sanitizing products.

Library and Erie County Department of Public Works (DPW) staff conducted a kickoff meeting for replacement of the Central Library's switchgear. It was communicated that the lead time for equipment orders could be close to 12 months, and a tentative target for commencement of the work is Fall/Winter of 2024.

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of WNY held a media event at Merriweather Library to announce a grant in the amount of \$6,000 for the Library to purchase additional AED's.

Library and City of Buffalo DPW staff conducted a walk-through of Coles Library with potential bidders for architecture/engineering design work there. This work includes roof replacement, HVAC replacement, installation of a Siemens energy management system, rehabilitation of the front façade, and rehabilitation of the parking lot.

## 5. Staff Development

**Intersect Unconference** - On October 13, the Central Library hosted the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Intersect Unconference, presented by the WNYLRC Continuing Education Committee. Library professionals from around the region attended a variety of workshops with the theme *Creating a Community in Your Library*. Orchard Park Librarian Trainee **Tim Allman**, Orchard Park Librarian **Samantha Adelman**, Cheektowaga Library Director **Daniel Caufield**, and System Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** presented programs, and a number of other B&ECPL staff attended the all-day event.

**Cyber Security Training** - In October, all staff were invited to complete cyber security awareness training through Trend Micro Phish Insight. The training emphasized the risk posed by cyber threats and taught staff how to recognize phishing attempts and take appropriate action. 303 employees completed the training, which considerably advanced the Library's progress towards completing the mandated annual technology training.

**Webinars** – Staff attended many pertinent webinars in October, including *30 Favorite Storytime Books and How to Use Them!* (presented by NY State Library), *Beyond Books: Adult Library Programs that Work!* (presented by Niche Academy), *The 411 on 211: Housing and Homelessness* (presented by WNYLRC), and *Trustee Handbook Book Club: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access & Justice* (presented by NYLA/Mid-Hudson Library System).

**6. Communications**

**Media:**

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Media Event - library participation with Director John Spears	AED Donation from the Buffalo Bills Foundation, Highmark Blue Cross and the American Heart Association	Tuesday, October 10, covered by WIVB TV Channel 4
Media release for media event	Lake Shore Public Library Music Garden Opening Celebration	Monday, October 30, covered by WIVB TV Channel 4 and WKBW TV Channel 7
Media Event - library participation with Assistant Deputy Director Dorinda Darden	Erie County Providing Eclipse Viewing Glasses to Residents, Libraries to Distribute	Tuesday, October 10, Covered by all media
Media Release, partnered with the May 14 Community Collecting Initiative to compose and distribute	Update: May 14th Community Collecting Initiative Local Coalition to Collect, Document, and Preserve an Authentic Record of the May 14, 2022 Targeted Mass Shooting	Sent October 16, 2023

**Social Media:  
October 2023**

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
<b>Facebook</b>	107	998	5,405	39,429	143	12,989
<b>Flickr</b>	41	307	10,504	46,367	-	60
<b>Google Ads <sup>1</sup></b>	N/A	N/A	2,309	18,078	N/A	N/A
<b>Instagram</b>	22	134	4,093	19,214	109	4,895
<b>Pinterest</b>	42	419	83	845	-2	2,110
<b>Podcast <sup>2</sup></b>	-	11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Twitter</b>	62	589	450	4,811	8	10,933
<b>YouTube</b>	14	79	1,277	11,421	6	547
<b>TikTok</b>	1	2	247	1,607	21	535
<b>Total</b>	289	2,539	24,368	141,772	285	32,069

<sup>1</sup> Google Ads is provided to the Library through a grant. Monthly activity based on public clicks.

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

<sup>3</sup> Effective September 2023, Instagram stats are for @buffalolibrary only. (Mobile Services account deleted.)

**7. Director Activities**

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting/Event</b>
October 2, 2023	MetLib Conference - Buenos Aires
October 3, 2023	MetLib Conference - Buenos Aires
October 4, 2023	MetLib Conference - Buenos Aires
October 5, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Cultural Collaborative
October 6, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Intellectual Freedom Manual
October 10, 2023	Virtual Meeting - PULISDO
October 10, 2023	Press Event - Highmark, Bills Foundation, and American Heart Association at Merriweather Branch Library
October 10, 2023	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 11, 2023	Meeting - Managers/Directors Meeting
October 11, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
October 11, 2023	Event - Books, Bites and Banter at Big Ditch Brewing Company
October 12, 2023	Virtual Meeting - May 14 Collecting Initiative
October 12, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora and Dorinda Darden
October 12, 2023	Virtual Meeting - New York Library Association Legislative Committee
October 12, 2023	Meeting - B&ECPL Executive Committee
October 16, 2023	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
October 16, 2023	Meeting - Administrative Team
October 16, 2023	Media - Channel 7 at Lackawanna with Pamela Edholm
October 16, 2023	Meeting - May 14 Memorial Commission
October 17, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 17, 2023	Meeting - ErieNet Audit & Finance Committee
October 17, 2023	Meeting - ErieNet Board of Directors
October 17, 2023	Meeting - Emily Patronik
October 18, 2023	Virtual Meeting - IFLA Public Library Guidelines Working Group
October 18, 2023	Virtual Meeting - WNY Digital Equity Coalition
October 18, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
October 19, 2023	Webinar - Session 80: Conversation with the Caterpillar: "Who are YOU?"
October 19, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System Directors
October 19, 2023	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
October 25, 2023	Meeting - Managerial/Confidential Benefits with Erin Vest
October 25, 2023	Virtual Meeting - WNYLRC
October 25, 2023	Meeting - Dorinda Darden



October 26, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora and Dorinda Darden
October 26, 2023	Event - Smart Streets Design Plan Washington Street Tours
October 26, 2023	Meeting - Ben Hilligas, Buffalo EOC, and Anne Conable
October 27, 2023	Meeting - Jeannine Purtell
October 27, 2023	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
October 27, 2023	Civics4Action in Corning, New York
October 30, 2023	Event - Grand Opening of the Music Garden at Lakeshore Public Library
October 30, 2023	Virtual Meeting - Masiello and Martucci
October 31, 2023	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
October 31, 2023	Meeting - Kate Bucki
October 31, 2023	Meeting - Emily Patronik

**Appendices**  
**A. Monthly Statistics**

**System Programming Statistics:**

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	846	7357	3470	26380
Children 5 and under	1048	11854	5094	42108
Children 6-11	1745	15852	4662	36590
Intergenerational/Combined	4917	45911	16339	111249
Teens	355	3602	1279	10177
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>8911</b>	<b>84576</b>	<b>30844</b>	<b>226504</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>8911</b>	<b>84576</b>	<b>30844</b>	<b>226504</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	18	177	161	1909
Children 5 and under	0	9	0	33
Children 6-11	0	6	0	167
Intergenerational/Combined	4	57	99	2116
Teens	1	81	3	349
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>4574</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	5	57	41	1157
Children 5 and under	1	1	4	4
Children 6-11	2	19	310	3541
Intergenerational/Combined	9	87	277	2650
Teens	0	1	0	20
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>7372</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>11946</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8951</b>	<b>85071</b>	<b>31739</b>	<b>238450</b>

\*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](http://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](http://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2023-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail).

## B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

**Marilla Free Library** – submitted by Shannon Thompson, Director

- **Marilla Free Library Book Club** meets at the library at 2:00 pm on the fourth Tuesday of the month. In October they read *Calling Me Home* by Julie Kibler. The selection for November is *The Lost Hours* by Karen White.
- On Thursday, October 19 we had **Lego Club** for children ages 5 to 12. The children designed and created special masterpieces we have on display in the library.
- We had a fun **Halloween Program with Ms. Shannon** on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> at 11 am for children 3 to 8 years old. The children came dressed up in costumes. We read holiday themed stories, played fun games including witch hat ring toss and mummy bowling. The children made a hanging ghost craft. To finish the program children went trick or treating around the library.
- **Take and Make Kits** – These kits have been very popular with our families. All of the kits include a craft, coloring sheets, activity ideas for the family as well as a list of suggested books on the theme. We will be offering various holiday Take and Make Kits this fall and winter.
- Our Friends of the Library **Book Sale** was held on October 20 and October 21. The sale was held at the Marilla Community Center. They also had a bake sale and basket raffle both days of the sale. We would like to thank all of the members of our Friends group and all of the volunteers who made the event a great success!
- We will be hosting our annual **Make a Graham Cracker Program** on December 2 and December 5. We will have two sessions on December 2 and one session on December 5 in the evening. This is a favorite Marilla Holiday Tradition for families. The program is run by the staff and the Friends of the Marilla Free Library sponsor the programs.

**Town of North Collins Public Library** - submitted by Alice Yoder, Library Manager

- Along with our regular programming (ABC Story Time, Chess Club, Take-and-Makes, LEGO Creations) here is a glimpse at some of our special programs for October.

- **Astronomy Night at the Library:** In 2023 and 2024, two eclipses will be occurring across the United States: An Annular Eclipse on October 14 and a Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024. We invited astronomy lover and Eclipse Ambassador, Kelly Dye to share his knowledge and safety tips for viewing these eclipses. We passed out solar eclipse glasses to those attending.
- **Teen Writing Club:** This is the second year for this wonderful program. Library Clerk, Jason Hussong has 17 excited teens signed up for this once a month program. The teens will be working on a short story, developing writing techniques, and mastering skills. In October editor and publisher Arthur A. Levine of Levine Querido joined us via Zoom to talk with the kids. Best-selling author Ruta Sepetys will speak to the teens in December. This program culminates in April when a collection of the short stories will be bound and published (free of charge!) by our friends at Quality Binder Services, Inc. in Buffalo. Come to the North Collins Library to check out last year's copy on our shelves now!
- **Art Club:** New in October is our Art Club led by a North Collins patron. Beth, who has an art degree, will be instructing the group on different techniques (this month, water colors) and providing an opportunity for attendees to be creative. We had 20 participants ranging in age from 2 to 70!
- **Book Club for kids:** Also new this fall is our Book Club for kids. This summer I was approached by a young patron who wanted to start a book club for her age group (we have one for adults and teens). I agreed to start one with her help. We've got a small group signed-up but their enthusiasm is awesome!

Agenda Item G - Report of the Foundation. Trustee Kelly reported that the Foundation met on Wednesday, November 15. The meeting involved planning for next year. The Foundation currently has six directors, and they can have up to 11. They are looking for more people to participate. She asked that if the Board had any recommendations for candidates, to let her and Trustee El-Behairy know. The Foundation has a proposal to the John R. Oishei Foundation seeking funding for developing a strategic plan. Trustee Kelly mentioned someone was interested in donating stock to a member library, however, there is no process for that currently. They want to work on developing a way in which that is possible.

Agenda Item H - The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Assistant Deputy Director for Systems Services Dorinda Darden stated that there will be an ACT General Meeting on Saturday November 18 at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library.

Agenda Item H.1. - Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee El-Behairy mentioned Hamburg Library's music garden event and said it went very well.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K – New Business. Two proposed resolutions were presented by Director Spears.

Agenda Item K.1 – Resolution 2023-39 Amend Library Managers Wage/Benefits Package. Director Spears explained proposed Resolution 2023-39 as presented. Director Spears went through the benefit changes and removals. Trustee Panty motioned for approval, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

#### RESOLUTION 2023-39

WHEREAS, there are three contracting libraries of the B&ECPL System, Angola Public Library, Marilla Free Library, and North Collins Public Library, who have employees in the title of Library Manager who are not represented by a bargaining unit, and

WHEREAS, Library Managers do not receive wage or benefits adjustments without approval of the B&ECPL System Board of Trustees, and

WHEREAS, as the result of collective bargaining, a significant disparity exists in the pay scales for Library Managers and other represented employees within the B&ECPL System holding the same job group (currently classified a Job Group 7), and

WHEREAS, B&ECPL Administration has reviewed the current wages and benefits of Library Managers and has recommended modifications, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, effective January 1 of 2023, 2024 and 2025 respectively, those holding the Library Manager title will be paid at the same hourly rate as the White Collar Job Group 7 as negotiated under the collective bargaining agreement of the Clerical & Maintenance Union of the B&ECPL for 2023, 2024, and 2025, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Library Director or their designee is authorized to implement budget transfers within the personnel accounts needed to budget for this change, and be it finally

RESOLVED, the Board authorizes the recommended changes to the Benefits Package for Library Managers effective January 1, 2023.

Agenda Item K.2 – Resolution 2023-40 Amend Managerial/Confidential Benefits Package. Director Spears explained proposed Resolution 2023-40 as presented. Director Spears went through the benefit changes and removals. Trustee Kelly asked how many managerial employees approximately does the Library have. Director Spears stated that there are approximately eleven managerial employees and one confidential employee. He continued to explain the updates to the benefits package. He did notify the Board that absent from these benefit package changes presented, they are not seeing the wage increase that was given to managerial and confidential employees for 2024. In previous discussions with the Board of Trustees, it was agreed that it was left at the discretion of the B&ECPL Director. Trustee Panty motioned for approval, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2023-40

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has employees who are designated as Managerial or Confidential, including Assistant Deputy Directors, Deputy Directors, and the Library Director who are excluded from participation in a bargaining unit, and

WHEREAS, benefits for Managerial and Confidential employees are approved by the B&ECPL Board of Trustees, and

WHEREAS, B&ECPL Administration has reviewed the current Benefits Package for Managerial/Confidential Employees and proposed recommended revisions, and

WHEREAS, the recommended revisions are consistent with benefits for managerial/confidential staff at Erie County as well as collective bargaining agreements of other Library staff, and

WHEREAS, on November 8, the recommendation for changes to the Benefits Package was shared with the Board’s Executive Committee and approved for transmittal to the full Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Board authorizes the recommended changes to the Benefits Package for Managerial/Confidential Employees effective December 1, 2023.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Amodeo with a second by Trustee Bedenko, the meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Moore  
Secretary