

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 19, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, December 19, 2024, 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
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Lucy Candelario
Theodore K. Johnson
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.
Elaine Panty
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum was present.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. Director John Spears proposed that he would like to enter into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter and that there will be a walk-on resolution immediately following the Executive Session under Agenda Item K – New Business.

Trustee Moore arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of November 21, 2024. Trustee Bucki remarked upon several grammatical errors and suggested corrections. Trustee Sasiadek motioned for approval of the Minutes as amended, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair Johnson encouraged Board members to donate to the Library this year. She also stressed the importance of completing the annual Trustee Education requirement and the Sexual Harassment Prevention training.

Agenda Item D.1 – Election of Nominating Committee. Chair Johnson communicated, per the Bylaws, that a Nominating Committee shall be selected at the December meeting in each year. It shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be appointed

by the Chair from the Board of Trustees and three of whom shall be elected by the Board of Trustees from its members. The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall appoint the Chair of the Nominating Committee. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to present to the January meeting nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and three members of the Executive Committee. Chair Johnson named Trustee Panty and Trustee Sasiadek as her two appointees. From the floor, Trustee Bedenko, Trustee Bartholomew, and Trustee Candelario volunteered. Trustee Sasiadek motioned to approve the slate as presented, Trustee Bucki made a second, and the aforementioned individuals were unanimously approved as the Nominating Committee. Chair Johnson requested Trustee Panty act as Chair of the committee, which she accepted.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.2 – Executive Committee. The Executive Committee scheduled for Thursday, December 12 was canceled due to inclement weather.

Agenda Item E.3 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.3.a – Resolution 2024-27 – Adoption of 2025 Budget. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik explained proposed Resolution 2024-27 as presented. She shared that earlier in December the Erie County Legislature adopted the 2025 Erie County budget. This included a 4.3% increase in County Library Tax funding.

RESOLUTION 2024-27

WHEREAS, on December 5, the Erie County Legislature finalized the County's 2025 Budget allocation for the Library, and

WHEREAS, the County's enacted budget provides a 4.3% increase in County Library Tax funding from 2024's \$29,675,375 to \$30,947,322, and

WHEREAS, this funding will allow the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) to sustain operations, prioritizing public access to resources, programs and services to help us serve our communities, and

WHEREAS, it helps to offset inflation-related impacts on library operating costs, including contractually obligated labor costs, a \$0.50 per hour increase in the minimum wage, and costs of supplies and utilities in this challenging fiscal environment, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees expresses its appreciation to the County Executive for recommending the funding and to the County Legislature in approving the recommended funding, and

WHEREAS, strong public support for the B&ECPL reinforces both the continuing need for innovative and responsive library services, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library adopts the 2025 Budget, utilizing the following sources to provide library services in 2025:

\$30,947,322 – County Property Tax for Library Purposes

\$ 2,460,929 – New York State Aid – Operating Budget

\$ 869,804 – Use of Fund Balance

\$ 421,373 – Library Fines, Fees and Other Revenue

\$34,669,428 – Total Operating Budget

\$ 601,418 – Library Recurring Grants Budget

\$35,270,846 – Combined Operating and Grants Budget, further detailed in the *2025 Budget in Brief Charts*, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the budget documents and schedules be promptly posted on the Library's website and the Library Director or designee(s) are authorized to execute all needed forms and accounting entries to implement this budget promptly.

Trustee Panty motioned for approval of Resolution 2024-27, Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Trustee T. Johnson arrived at 4:10 p.m.

Agenda Item E.3.b – Monthly Financial Report. ADD-Controller Patronik reviewed the Library financials ending on October 31, 2024. She stated that the Library's revenue is over budget and expenses are lower than expected. Discussion ensued regarding the monthly financial report and fringe benefits. ADD-Controller Patronik went on to explain health insurance waivers.

Trustee El-Behairy asked ADD-Controller Patronik when the Budget and Finance Committee plans on meeting again. ADD-Controller Patronik stated that she plans on scheduling a meeting beginning in January. She also stated that she would like for the Budget and Finance Committee to meet quarterly.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Director Spears began his report by informing the Board that Library Advocacy Day is on Wednesday, February 5. He stated that if any Board members are interested in attending to let him know. Next, Director Spears communicated that the Library is due to start their five year plan of service. The current one runs from 2022 to 2026. The next one will be from 2027 to 2031. The State Library is in the process of formulating questions that need to be answered for the plan of service

which is due by October 1, 2026. Discussion ensued regarding the plan of service, what it consists of, and the Board's involvement.

Following that, Director Spears notified the Board that there will be a potential opportunity for the Board to attend the MetLib Conference in Toronto, ON. The theme of the conference is civic engagement and social connections. It is currently scheduled for October 2025.

Finally, Director Spears wanted to inform the Board of a change happening on the Library administrative team. The Library's Assistant Deputy Director Samantha Purpora is making a career shift to patient education at Roswell Park. He shared that ADD Samantha Purpora has done a tremendous job for the Library and she will be missed.

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

B&ECPL Monthly Report November 2024

Explore Buffalo - Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** hosted the final installment of the Explore Buffalo yearlong speaker series with Debra Hall-Stonish on November 2, titled *Christmas Shopping in Buffalo*. Those in attendance reminisced about dressing up and visiting the many department stores that once lined the streets of downtown Buffalo.

Job Fair - In partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** coordinated the *Job Fair* at the Central Library on November 6. Forty-one businesses participated with nearly 350 people in attendance. In addition, a *Demystify Civil Service* workshop presented by Adam Dolce from the New York State Department of Civil Service was held in the auditorium after the *Job Fair*. This presentation gave an overview of the civil service system, how to apply for jobs, different types of jobs and information on the NY HELPS (New York Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide) program.

The 8th annual **Indie Author Day** was the largest yet with 275 attendees including aspiring and established local writers. Held in the Central Library's Auditorium on November 2, the program included speakers and topics on publishing options, expected costs, book coaches/editors, and library resources for writers. Three established authors and a panel of three more shared their experiences, tips and insights. The B&ECPL has been a participating partner of this national effort to connect writers with their libraries and communities since its inception. The program was run by the **Development & Communications Department**.

Native American Heritage Month - In celebration of *Native American Heritage Month*, System Services was able to provide all libraries who wanted them with reading lists, buttons, bookmarks, and posters. In addition, the Town of Collins Public Library and the Grand Island Memorial Library hosted Percy Ground, a Haudenosaunee storyteller. At Collins, he presented on *Stories of the Longhouse* and on Grand Island, his presentation was on *Rethinking Thanksgiving*. The Central Library and the Lackawanna Public Library presented *The Good Mind*, a documentary on the Onondaga Nation and their fight with the United States government over ancestral land taken by New York State. The documentary was also viewed remotely by patrons via Zoom. The Angola Public Library and the Newstead Public Library hosted *Indigenous Spirit Dancers* as part of the *Native American Heritage Month* celebration. All of these events were coordinated through the Systemwide *Cultural & Special Days Committee* chaired by System Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** and paid for from funds provided by the System.

New York Library Association (NYLA) 2024 Annual Conference Presentation - **Susan Buttaccio** provided a presentation, *Giving Life to Local History with Online Exhibits*, with colleagues from the Central New York Library Resources Council at the NYLA 2024 Annual Conference in Syracuse on November 8. Nearly 40 library professionals were present to learn how to mount their own online exhibit on the New York Heritage platform. **Susan** spoke of her experience working with community partners to mount the *Buffalo's Neighborhoods: Exploring Our Migrant & Immigrant Heritage* exhibit in 2023.

Shop for FREE - **Jacob Rachwal** worked with representatives from UB HEALS (Homeless health, Education, Awareness, and Leadership in Street medicine) who offered a *Shop for FREE* event in the Central Library on November 9. UB HEALS is a street medicine outreach initiative of the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Those in attendance were able to shop, free of charge, for new winter coats, clothing and shoes. Snacks were also provided. Thanks to the generosity of UB HEALS, patrons were able to access thousands of dollars in new winter clothing.

Thanksgiving Lunch and Health Expo - **Jacob Rachwal** worked with UB HEALS, White Coats for Black Lives and We R Buffalo Strong to host a *Thanksgiving Lunch and Health Expo* at the Central Library on November 23. Lunch was served outdoors under the Ellicott Street overpass. Inside the Library, attendees were able to receive CPR and Narcan training, get Narcan and fentanyl test strips, have blood pressure and blood sugar tests and have consultations with a doctor. Free hygiene kits and winter clothing items were also offered. Over 100 people attended this event.

1. Public Services

Central Library:

Traveling Trivia – On November 26, Adult Services Librarian **Ros Damico** and Adult Services Librarian Trainee **Faith Miller** held Trivia @ the Library at the North Park Branch due to feedback from patrons and the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. This was coordinated with the help and approval of North Park Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark**, who provided the North Park meeting room and the usage of their technical equipment to run the program. With a total of 15 attendees, a mix of Central regulars and North Park regulars, the program was well received with patron feedback stating that they thought that there were “cool prizes!”, “fun questions!” and that they “...learned a lot” and thought it was a “fun atmosphere.”

Children’s Room Happenings - Throughout the month of November, the Children’s Room hosted five different class visits from Bennett Park, West Buffalo Charter, and BOCES Chautauqua. Ages ranged from pre-kindergarten to adults with disabilities, and visits covered topics ranging from chemical reactions to the planets. A total of 143 students visited the Library through field trips in November! Librarian **Jennifer Lelinski** continued with her *Baby Toddler Storytime* program which meets every Tuesday at 10 a.m. Between the four different sessions of the month, a total of 54 children visited the Library specifically for story time. *Crafternoons with Mr. Dan* have continued throughout the month of November as well, running on every Saturday with an additional pop-up craft during the week. Ranging from buttons, to mittens, to paint nights, a total of 92 crafters joined the Children’s Room craft nights.

Teen Space Happenings - On November 1, Library Assistant **Sarah Barry** held the monthly TAG Meeting. On November 15, Librarian **Kelly Woods** and **Sarah** led a school tour and activity with Ken-Ton Big Picture. The class visit was comprised of 15 students and two teachers and all students made slime. On November 16, **Kelly** hosted BrainSparks, with four teens in attendance who made wire trees. On November 21, Teen Services Manager **Taylor Harding** led school tours for Frontier High School with 16 students and two teachers in attendance. This class visit was held in conjunction with the Grosvenor Room. They led research instruction with the group and taught them how to use library resources to trace their genealogy.

System Services:

Genealogy Training – Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** presented *Ask the Genealogist* sessions at the Orchard Park Senior Center on November 8 and Autumnwood Senior Center in Buffalo on November 20, in partnership with Erie County Department of Senior Services’ *University Express* program. **Rhonda** also taught the online class, *From Birth to Death: New York State Vital Records* on November 13. In coordination with **Rhonda**, Leatha Jimerson of the Iroquois Genealogy Society taught the *Beginning Genealogy* class at the Central Library on November 16 with a focus on Seneca genealogy. **Susan Buttaccio** and **Rhonda** welcomed students from

Frontier High School on November 21 for a session on using Grosvenor Room genealogical resources.

Oral History Training - Susan Buttaccio and Special Collections Librarian Adam Rubin conducted an *Oral History Training* for 10 members of the Environmental Justice Corps program in the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library on November 6.

Reading Club - Special Collections Librarian Elizabeth (Libby) Stengel hosted the monthly meeting of *Paging through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club* on November 21.

Technology Training - TechKnow Lab Librarian Brendan Chella taught two virtual classes on *Using Google* and the *Cloud* on November 8 and November 22 respectively as part of the Erie County Department of Senior Services' *University Express* program. TechKnow Lab Library Assistant Isabell Berger taught the *iPad-iPhone Basics* class in the TechKnow Lab at the Central Library on November 19.

Displays and Exhibits:

Rare Book Curator Heather Gring set up new displays to correspond with upcoming programming highlighting *The Discovery of Witches*. The displays explore texts about the history of witchcraft trials and occult symbolism in historic manuscripts.

Tours and Visits:

Throughout the month, Heather Gring provided tours of the Rare Book Room, including for staff, community leaders, and potential donors to the collection.

Rare Book and Map Librarian Charles Alaimo provided a tour of the Mark Twain Room and presentation of the Huckleberry Finn manuscript to Brian Hayden, Senior Director of Marketing & Communications and Drew Brown, Director of Media & Content Strategy for Visit Buffalo Niagara on November 20. Charles provided them with information for an upcoming profile of the Grosvenor Room.

Heather Gring provided a tour of Special Collections to students from Frontier High School on November 21 and conducted the monthly Special Collections tour on November 23.

Buffalo Branches:

Crane Programming Highlights:

- Crane Branch Library hosted weekly story times in November with a total of 98 patrons attending.
- Library staff hosts a weekly and on-demand LEGO Club with 18 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch Library hosted a Button Making event on November 20 with 17 patrons participating.

- Library staff orchestrated a November Scavenger Hunt in which patrons found nine images hidden throughout the children's section and then picked a prize with 198 patrons participating.
- Crane Branch Library hosts a Chess Club for kids on Saturday mornings with 28 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch Library hosts a Nintendo Switch gaming program on Thursday afternoons with 10 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch Library distributed 270 take and makes in November.
- Crane Branch Library hosted a Matinee Movie on November 29 with nine patrons attending.
- Library staff hosted Hawk Creek on November 2 with 45 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch Library hosted our monthly Drag Story Time with 44 patrons attending.
- Crane Branch Library hosts *Game with Crane Night* on the last Tuesday of the month with two attendees in November.
- Crane Branch Library put out a community puzzle for patrons to collectively work on with eight patrons participating in November.
- Crane Branch Library hosted a Muppet Trivia Night on November 18 with 22 patrons attending.

Panty Programming Highlights:

- The partnership with Arts for Learning continues to draw in Buffalo area youth. Throughout November, eight teens participated in the arts and craft projects happening at the branch.
- Librarian **Stefanie Anawald** hosted the first Tuesday story time of the fall story time learning series.
- Kids helped decorate the branch for Thanksgiving by sharing what they are thankful for. We had eight participants share that they are thankful for things such as family, Mom, toys, food, books, and having a library.
- In November, branch staff assembled 12 turkey headband take & make kits. The kits were from the Ellison dies.
- Mission Ignite was in the branch to complete computer training classes for a few local patrons. In total, three people completed their basic computer class through Tech 360, and one patron was assisted with Digital Navigation.
- Our November No-Pressure Book Club saw two new participants, bringing the total to seven for this meeting. During this session, participants discussed some new and old titles, some of which were surprisingly good, and others just disappointing. Discussions included end-of-days prophecies, understanding cultures through their mythologies and stories, cozy mysteries with lighthearted storytelling, children's classics and the lessons that are still relevant (or are they?), and some thrillers with an unexpected twist or a surprise ending.

Outreach:

November 1 - Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** coordinated craft and educational activities during Buffalo AKG Art Museum's *Diwali*. The event was organized by the Asian Pacific American Public Affairs Association and sponsored by

M&T Bank, partnering with various local organizations, including the Buffalo Tamil Committee, Coalition for Asian American Children & Families, and Council of Heritage and Arts of India, Inc. With help from AKG staff and volunteers, **Kuniko** provided word searches of Diwali terms with books from Central's collections, Lotus accessories for making Rangoli scratch arts, and Diya decorations.

The Library on Wheels Bookmobile participated in special events throughout the month. Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** and Library Assistant **Anthony Skubis** attended the Good for the Neighborhood *Health and Wellness* event at the Akron Newstead Senior Center on November 7. **Andrew** and Mobile Services Senior Page **Loch McLaughlin** attended the Pelion Garden Classroom's *Squash Chop-n-Drop* garden winterization event on November 9. In between chopping pumpkins, mixing fallen leaves, and preparing the garden beds for winter, 21 patrons visited the Bookmobile. They checked out materials, applied for library cards, and reminisced about childhood memories of their own bookmobile experiences.

On November 21, **Andrew** and **Anthony** attended the University at Buffalo Educational Opportunity Center's 2nd Annual Family Literacy event, "Sowing Seeds of Literacy." The event featured local author Maria Pérez-Gómez reading from her book, *The Magical Closet Mystery*. In addition, distribution of food, clothing, and holiday cheer were provided by St. Luke's Mission of Mercy and the Mary B. Talbert Civil and Cultural Club. Additional resources from the Child Care Resource Network and Cornell Cooperative Extension were also distributed throughout the evening. Forty-three patrons explored and enjoyed the Bookmobile.

Andrew and Mobile Services Librarian Trainee **Olivia Adams** attended the *Hamburg Holiday Parade* in the Village of Hamburg on November 30. Hundreds of families braved the elements and faced the incoming lake effect snow to celebrate and kick off the holiday season.

Susan Buttaccio presented on *The History of the Central Library and the Significance of its Collection* at the Concord Senior Center on November 5, the City of Tonawanda Public Library on November 15, and the Amherst Senior Center on November 20, in coordination with Erie County Department of Senior Services' *University Express* program.

System Adult Outreach Services staff participated in several outreach events throughout the month. **Carol Kowalik-Happy** and **Jacob Rachwal** provided tabling at Buffalo Toronto Public Media's *Senior Prom* event for older adults held at WNED PBS Studios in Buffalo on November 2. They shared information on Libby & hoopla, *Library by Mail* service, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) resources, technology training and many other library programs and services. A reporter from WBFO interviewed **Carol** on the importance of events like this. She discussed the problem of senior isolation and how the Library strives to combat that with programs and services for seniors. Over 200 people visited their table. **Carol** attended the *Wellness and Health Expo* at the Edward Saunders Community Center in Buffalo on November 13. Attendees received information about library services. Many people

were interested in the *Library by Mail* program and several attendees filled out library card applications. **Carol** interacted with over 50 people.

TechKnow Lab staff provided technology training at community centers throughout the month. **Brendan Chella** and **Isabell Berger** presented on *Instacart* at the Northwest Community Center in Amherst on November 4. On November 7, **Brendan** provided the *Internet Privacy and Safety* technology class at the Delavan Grider Community Center and one-on-one Book a Technology Trainer sessions at Tosh Collins Community Center. **Brendan** visited the Orchard Park Senior Center to present on *Basic Device Maintenance* on November 12. **Brendan** and **Isabell** presented on *Files and Folders* at the Dorothy J. Collier Community Center on November 13. **Brendan** taught classes on *Securing Facebook* at the Delavan Grider Community Center and *Android Basics* at the Tosh Collins Community Center on November 14.

2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	1,905	27,859	194	2,687	512,579
Young Adult Print	277	5,794	61	951	70,139
Adult Print	2,970	41,085	606	7,650	1,770,378
Media	2,290	24,503	231	2,522	519,472
Other*	1,729	19,059	18	290	172,049
Subtotal	9,171	118,300	1,110	14,100	3,044,617

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,045	44,806	1,147	14,649	126,787
eAudiobooks	5,585	89,991	371	4,225	64,851
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,726
Subtotal	9,630	134,797	1,518	18,874	197,364

*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	18,801	253,097	2,628	32,974	3,241,981

Digital Collections – The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library’s Digital Collections on the Omeka and New York State Historic Newspapers platforms garnered 419,754 views in November. This does not include digital collections hosted on New York

Heritage, as those numbers are not yet available. Year to date, the B&ECPL Digital Collections received over 3.1 million page views across three platforms, a 120% increase from 2023. This is due to the dedication of **Adam Rubin**, who maintains the digital collections.

Rare Books and Special Collections - Heather Gring made a number of end-of-year purchases for the Rare Book collection, including:

- First and early editions of Lucille Clifton’s poetry and juvenile publications, many signed;
- First editions by Indigenous authors Eric Gansworth, who is enrolled Onondaga and was raised at the Tuscarora Nation, and Arthur C. Parker of the Seneca Nation;
- Signed first editions of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *One Day When I Was Lost* by James Baldwin, *In Love & Trouble: Stories of Black Women* by Alice Walker, and multiple works by Sandra Cisneros;
- A collection of zines made by archivist and activist Mariame Kaba, whose work “focuses on ending violence, dismantling the prison industrial complex, transformative justice and supporting youth leadership development;”
- Additions to the juvenile collection including signed copies of *Peaches* by Dindga McCannon, *Buffalo Gals Won’t You Come Out Tonight* by Ursula K. LeGuin, and *Akata Witch* and *Akata Warrior* by Nnedi Okorafor.
- Funds from the Rare Book & Special Collections Endowment and the Seth Grosvenor Books and Materials Endowment supported the purchase of several items, including a signed first-trade edition of *Sketches from the Dream Island of Birds* (2005) by Charles Van Sandwyck, and Book Arts acquisitions including *Tapestry Folios Series: #1 Fauna Fables* by Islam Aly, *Anguilla Prison Massacre* by Mariame Kaba and Tash Nikol, and *Please Remember to Rewind Your Mind* by Candace Hicks.

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – November 30, 2024	\$355,194.14

Highlights:

100,000 Annual Appeal letters were mailed to Library patrons in early November. To date (11/30), 611 donations have been received totaling \$43,963.

Mass Emails sent in November:

A Happy Thanksgiving Email was sent to library cardholders who have opted in to receive communication, approximately 80,000, and had a 37% open rate.

4. Facilities

Graphics Manager **Dawn Stanton** is working with the office of New York State Assemblyman Jonathan Rivera and Arts Services Initiatives (ASI) on selecting a mural for the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library.

5. Staff Development

Staff Members from Across the Library System Attend the NYLA 2024 Annual Conference - The New York Library Association (NYLA) annual conference was held this year in Syracuse in early November. B&ECPL funded twelve employees to attend this year's conference: **Susan Buttaccio, Chelsey Lonberger, Amealie Brousseau, Carol Kowalik-Happy, Jennifer Lelinski** and **John Spears** all from Central Library, **Meagan Carr** from Lancaster Library, **Alexandria Dotegowski** from Orchard Park Public Library, **Katherine Pizzuto** from Audubon Branch, **Rowan Narvaez** from West Seneca Public Library, and **Matthew Best** and **Jeff Matrachisia**, both from Anna Reinstein Memorial Library. Each attendee will give a presentation on the best of what they learned at the conference during the January 2025 Managers & Directors Meeting, with B&ECPL Staff Development helping to organize topics.

Online Workshop on Streamlining Outreach Program Strategies - In November, Visual Resources Association held a two-part online workshop on "Events Made Easy-A Deep Dive on Developing and Executing Outreach Programs." The training focused on ways that staff can maximize limited resources to still effectively and optimally serve their communities. B&ECPL funded four seats; attendees included **Stefanie Anawald** from Panty Branch, **Kathleen Mack** from Orchard Park, and **Rhonda Hoffman** and **Helen Shandraw**, both from Central Library. This group will share the best of what they learned with our whole organization, with support from B&ECPL Staff Development to help organize the project.

Half-Day Virtual Training on Media Best Practices for Library Leadership - Library Journal hosted a half-day online training in November called "Media Training: PR and Communication Skills for Library Leaders." The course aimed to help leaders learn how to handle media inquiries, craft compelling narratives, and manage crisis situations with confidence. B&ECPL covered three registrations; attendees included **Nicole Brown** from Kenmore Branch, and **Maria Lowe** and **Sean Piazza**, both from Central Library. This group will present key takeaways of what they learned to other library leaders at the March 2025 Managers & Directors Meeting.

"Words in the Workplace" Communication Wellness Series Continues for All Employees - Last month, the Library kicked off an online training series for all staff hosted by EviCore EAP. The range of topics in this six-part event are geared toward

helping everyone improve communication skills to foster a more positive workplace culture. Three sessions were held in November: *Dealing with Change and Emotions*; *Civility and Courtesy in the Workplace*; and *Anger Management*. The series will have two more new topics in December before wrapping up, with recordings posted to the Staff Intranet after each event. Anyone who attends all six dates and completes a short reflection afterwards is entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of two \$50 gift cards from Target! Prizes are courtesy of EviCore.

Tai Chi Series for Central Library Staff Starts in November - Central Library staff had the opportunity to participate in a workplace wellness event sponsored by Labor Management Healthcare Fund (LMHF). A Tai Chi class was offered on November 15 with five employees registered. The series continues into December, with two more wellness events from LMHF slated for next month.

Webinars - Personnel participated in an assortment of webinars and other virtual learning programs in November, with multiple employees attending these sessions that were promoted on the Staff Training Calendar: *Project Communication and Collaboration for Libraries* (from Long Island Library Resources Council); *Gen Z: Difficult to Manage or Just Different?* (from TerryBerry.com); *Gender Identity in the Workplace: A Personal Journey* (from myGwork.com), and *Reports Reimagined: Using Infographics to Showcase Library Data* (from Western New York Library Resources Council).

6. Communications

Advocacy: 953 letters, signed by library patrons representing all 37 libraries in the system, were dropped off to members of the Erie County Legislature encouraging the lawmakers to vote in favor of the County Executive's proposed 2025 budget allocation of Library Real Property Taxes in the amount of \$30,947,322.

Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Media Alert	Hearts for the Homeless' Mobile Soup Kitchen (Coles Branch)	November 20, 2024
	Mark Twain Birthday	
Press Release	Reopening date of the Isaias Gonzalez-Soto Branch Library	November 25
Interview and photos with Launch Pad Librarian and Director Jordan Smith	MakerSpace at the Central Library	The Buffalo News, January 2025 issue

Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** and Marketing Manager **Sean Piazza** attended the Library Marketing & Communications Conference, presented by Amigos Library Services and The Library Marketing Communications Group in St. Louis, MO.

Attended by 400+ library marketing professionals, they networked and attended programs on successful social media campaigns, effective email outreach, strategies to incorporate the values of DEI in communications, and advocating for libraries.

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	74	1,226	1,427	33,816	78	13,975
Flickr	29	188	5,516	39,646	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,293	29,348	N/A	N/A
Instagram	22	229	2,586	45,505	88	6,927
Pinterest	44	360	55	971	-2	2,051
X(formerly Twitter)²	38	685	85	2,708	-205	10,684
Bluesky	35	35	211	211	384	384
YouTube	10	94	2,102	26,890	7	707
TikTok	-	5	2,050	8,205	5	1,007
Total	252	2,822	16,325	187,300	355	35,794

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

² Twitter (X) analytics were hand-calculated, as the platform now only offers built-in analytics statistics to premium (paying) users.

The Library has launched an account on Bluesky, a rapidly expanding social media platform that has grown from 13 million users in October to over 21 million in November 2024. This strategic move allows us to engage with a potential new audience, including those migrating from other platforms. (Handle: @buffalolibrary.bsky.social)

7. Partnerships

Black Rock Historical Society - Libby Stengel met with William Butler, President of the Black Rock Historical Society, to coordinate a donation of *The Skipper*, the Riverside High School yearbook.

Children's Centers in the Courts - System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** attended the *Children's Centers in the Courts Advisory Board Meeting* for the New York Unified Court System held on November 12. The meeting was held in a courtroom to showcase the importance of providing daycare facilities for children while parents/guardians are in court. **Chelsey** and System Youth Outreach Services Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** also delivered books to the daycare facilities for

Erie County and City of Buffalo courts. These were books donated to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library by Project Flight for giveaways.

Erie County Historical Commission - Susan Buttaccio continues to serve on the Erie County Historical Commission, attending meetings on markers and preservation efforts, Diversity, Accessibility, & Inclusion (DEAI), and Erie Canal commemorations.

Project Flight - System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Melissa Blattner**, along with **Dr. Elizabeth Cappella** and **Dr. Geraldine Bard**, co-directors of Project Flight, have had their paper *Promoting Altruism Through Literacy, Volunteerism and Service-Learning Programs to Enhance Social Justice, Equity and Peace* accepted to the Oxford Education Research Symposium at St. Anne's College, University of Oxford. They will be presenting the paper in Oxford in March 2025. **Melissa** will be highlighting the Peace Libraries that arose in the Buffalo area after the *May 14, 2022 Buffalo Massacre*.

Youth Services Consultants in New York's Public Library Systems - Chelsey Lonberger attended the *Youth Services Consultants in New York's Public Library Systems* meeting in Syracuse on November 7. Attendees discussed speakers who could provide training for continuing education. Members also discussed the items they lend to their libraries. **Chelsey** was tasked with creating a document used for sharing information.

System Services staff were also in contact or attended meetings with representatives of the following groups and organizations:

- Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson Children's Museum
- 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Fighting White Supremacy
- Help Me Grow
- Live Well Erie Working Groups
- New York State Librarian
- PEDALS (Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills)
- Peaceprints of WNY
- Outreach Coordinators in New York's Public Library Systems
- Southern Tier Library System
- State University of New York at Buffalo (UB)
- United States Department of Labor
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees

8. Planning for the Future

Carol Kowalik-Happy has been in conversation with Rod Christian, a representative for Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jonathan Eig. Plans are being made to bring Eig to the Central Library next summer for a presentation.

On November 13, **Carol** met with Samuel DiVincenzo, Jr., executive director of the Build Promise Homeless Shelter. This is a new shelter opening in fall 2025, across from St. Luke's Mission of Mercy on Sycamore Street in Buffalo. It will include a resource

center that will be available to residents of the shelter as well as residents of the community. They are looking for partners to offer job and computer skills classes. Mr. DiVincenzo is pleased with the programs and services the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library can provide and will keep in touch as the project nears completion.

Libby Stengel met with Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton** and Assistant Library Display Artist **Helen Shandraw** on November 13 to plan an upcoming exhibit celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Erie Canal's completion. The exhibit will highlight local history books, maps, and photographs available in Special Collections. The exhibit will debut at the Central Library in the Ring of Knowledge in May 2025.

Heather Gring has continued working with professors Walt Hakala, Lisa Berglund, and curatorial assistant Hannah Stocklosa on the upcoming Rare Book exhibition about dictionaries, opening in mid-April 2025.

Heather Gring has been in conversation with photographer Tafawa Hicks, curator Michelle Hale, and appraiser Mark Dabney about the future of Hicks' extensive collection of photographic negatives documenting the history of Buffalo's African American communities in the mid-20th century.

9. Director Activities

Meetings/Events Attended by Director

November 2024

Date	Meeting/Event
November 1, 2024	Meeting - Judy Fachko
November 1, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
November 1, 2024	Interview - Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer
November 1, 2024	Virtual Meeting - Intellectual Freedom Manual
November 4, 2024	Meeting - Erin Vest
November 4, 2024	Meeting - Administrative Team
November 4, 2024	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Steering Committee
November 4, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
November 5, 2024	Meeting - Librarians Association Negotiations
November 5, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
November 6, 2024	Meeting - Public Library System Directors Organization
November 6, 2024	Meeting - New York State Alliance of Library Systems
November 7, 2024	Conference - New York Library Association Conference: Syracuse, NY
November 8, 2024	Conference - New York Library Association Conference: Syracuse, NY
November 9, 2024	Conference - New York Library Association Conference: Syracuse, NY

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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November 12, 2024	Meeting - Emily Patronik
November 13, 2024	Hearing - Erie County 2025 Budget
November 14, 2024	Meeting - Clerical & Maintenance Union of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library - Contracting Libraries
November 14, 2024	Interview - Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer
November 14, 2024	Interview - Deputy Director/Chief Operating Officer
November 14, 2024	Meeting - Executive Committee
November 20, 2024	Meeting - Erin Vest
November 20, 2024	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
November 21, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
November 21, 2024	Virtual Meeting - PLS Directors
November 21, 2024	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
November 22, 2024	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
November 25, 2024	Advocacy - Assemblymember Jon Rivera
November 26, 2024	Meeting - Samantha Purpora
November 26, 2024	Meeting - Library Counsel

Appendices

A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	943	11057	3900	38329
Children 5 and under	1357	15542	5027	57465
Children 6-11	1877	20096	3491	44242
Intergenerational/Combined	4308	50398	7936	124471
Teens	274	3915	480	7549
Regular Total	8759	101008	20834	272056
Regular Total	8759	101008	20834	272056
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	19	180	142	1996
Children 5 and under	0	3	0	48
Children 6-11	0	5	0	186
Intergenerational/Combined	5	61	57	1151
Teens	1	75	2	176
Live Virtual Total	25	324	201	3557
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	0	48	0	1208
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	21	270	2843

Intergenerational/Combined	12	103	699	8950
Teens	0	0	0	0
Recorded Virtual Total	14	172	969	13001
Virtual Total	39	496	1170	16558
Grand Total	8798	101504	22004	288614

*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, Wi-Fi 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, Wi-Fi usage, and library visits can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2024-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

Hamburg Public Library – submitted by Brian R. Hoth, Director

Hamburg Library

Horror in the Library - On October 3, magician Cris Johnson visited to present "Horror in the Library!" The program involved spooky subject matter, creepy magic, mind reading, and more. Thirty-three children and adults attended.

Village of Hamburg Trick or Treat - On October 26, the annual Trick or Treat in the Village was held. The Library served as a stop with staff handing out candy to 506 trick or treaters! A parade was held afterwards.

Class Visits - On November 1, Hamburg Nursery School visited with 24 children in attendance. Librarian **Nicole Brown** conducted a tour of the building including the staff area. She read stories and let them discharge items. On November 8, 48 5th grade students from Charlotte Avenue Elementary School visited. **Nicole** gave a tour including behind the scenes areas such as the staff work areas and presented on library operations including programs and services provided. She also read them a story. Afterwards, they did a scavenger hunt to find where things are located throughout the library and how they work. For example, how much copies cost.

Library Advocacy - On November 13, Librarian **Nicole Brown**, Trustee and vice president Cate Lee, and Director **Brian Hoth** attended an advocacy meeting with Senator Patrick Gallivan at Hilbert College's McGrath Library. Topics of discussion included construction aid funding, staffing, and providing in-house social workers.

Stories with Santa - This very popular program, part of *Hamburgh Holidays*, will be held on Tuesdays, December 10 and 17. Children will experience stories read by Santa

and Mrs. Claus and craft making. Hot chocolate and donuts are being provided and served by the Kiwanis Club of Hamburg.

WNY Foster Closet - The Hamburg Library serves as a drop-off location for WNY Foster Closet, which provides clothing, toys, and other items to children who have been placed in the foster care system. Donations are being accepted from October through December.

Kid Librarian - Librarian Trainee **Sarah Hoover** hosted three Kid Librarians in September and October. Kid Librarians curate a display on a topic of their choice to feature in the Children's Area. Themes were "Mysteries," "Kids in History," and "Fantasy for All Ages." In addition, each Kid Librarian created a poster to display with their collection. Displays are up an average of two weeks.

Outreach Events - On October 17, Librarian Trainee **Sarah Hoover** and Page **Emily Fraser** attended the Scholastic Book Fair at Union Pleasant Elementary School with 141 parents and children attending. The event is hosted by the Parent Teacher's Association. A craft was provided for children. The staff had library card signups and provided informational materials on programs. On October 17, Library Associate **Laurie Obrochta** did story time at the Giving Garden with 44 adults and children in attendance. She read stories and sang songs. The Giving Garden is an outdoor space located on Pleasant Avenue across the street from Union Pleasant Elementary. The staff is asked to do a story time 2 to 3 times a year.

- Baby Bounce is held on 2nd and 4th Mondays with 2 sessions beginning at 10:00 am with a registration limit of 20 participants. Join Miss Nicole for silly stories, music, movement, and more! This is geared for children ages 0 to 24 months with a caregiver.
- Story time Shookup is held on Wednesdays with 2 sessions beginning at 10:30 am with a registration limit of 20 participants. Join Miss Laurie for an hour of stories, music, dancing, and more! This is geared for children 3 to 5 years of age.
- Camp Create is a monthly craft program for children ages 6-12 with Miss Laurie.

Lake Shore Library

Halloween Party - On October 19, Librarian **Stephanie Molnar** and Library Associate **Laurie Obrochta** held the annual Halloween Party with 35 attendees. Children decorated cookies donated by a neighbor, made crafts, played bingo, and listened to a story.

- Story time with Miss Stephanie is held on Tuesdays at 10:00 am for children ages 3 to 6. Programming is based on a weekly theme with crafts afterwards. This program averages 20 children and adults attending weekly.
- Cookbook Club is held on the 2nd Monday of the month with 10 attendees. Each month participants choose a recipe from a chosen cookbook, make it at home, and bring it in to share. Afterwards, they take turns discussing their creations.
- Adult craft night is held on the 3rd Monday of the month. In October, 11 participants made paper mosaics with scrapbook paper donated by a patron.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation. Trustee El-Behairy shared that the Foundation had a working meeting on Monday, December 16. They are working on the strategic plan and should have it finalized in a couple months. The Foundation will work with Director Spears and Assistant Deputy Director Joy Testa Cinquino to coordinate aspects of the strategic plan before it is presented to the Board. Trustee El-Behairy also stated that the Foundation will need to fill two spots on their Board soon. Per the Foundation’s Bylaws those two spots need to be filled by two Trustees from the B&ECPL Board of Trustees. Discussion ensued regarding specifics.

Agenda Item H – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. None.

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

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K – New Business.

Agenda Item K.1 – Resolution 2024-28 – Appointment to Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer. Director Spears explained the proposed Resolution 2024-28 as presented below. Director Spears also wanted to note that the difference in salaries between the Deputy Directors is not actually a difference and that it is due to a Cost-of-Living adjustment that will go into effect later in January.

RESOLUTION 2024-28

WHEREAS, the Unconsolidated Laws of the State of New York authorize the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) Board of Trustees to appoint Deputy Directors for three-year terms, and

WHEREAS, the Library Director has determined that Angela Marinucci is the most qualified individual to fill the position of Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer, and

WHEREAS, Angela Marinucci exceeds all civil service and other requirements for the position, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the appointment of Angela Marinucci to the position of Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer, at an initial salary of \$140,400, for a three-year appointment to be effective January 11, 2025. The terms and conditions of her current Managerial and Confidential Benefits Package

shall remain the same, unless otherwise amended by future vote of the Board of Trustees.

Trustee T. Johnson motioned for approval, Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K.2 – Resolution 2024-29 – Appointment to Deputy Director – Public Services. Director Spears explained proposed Resolution 2024-29 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2024-29

WHEREAS, the Unconsolidated Laws of the State of New York authorize the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) Board of Trustees to appoint Deputy Directors for three-year terms, and

WHEREAS, the Library Director has determined that Dorinda Darden is the most qualified individual to fill the position of Deputy Director – Public Services, and

WHEREAS, Dorinda Darden exceeds all civil service and other requirements for the position, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the B&ECPL Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the appointment of Dorinda Darden to the position of Deputy Director – Public Services, at an initial salary of \$135,000, for a three-year appointment to be effective December 28, 2024. The terms and conditions of her current Benefits Package shall remain the same, unless otherwise amended by future vote of the Board of Trustees.

Trustee T. Johnson motioned for approval, Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K.3 – Executive Session/Walk-on Resolution 2024-30. Chair Johnson proposed to enter into Executive Session in order to discuss a personnel matter. Trustee Kelly motioned to enter into Executive Session, Trustee Panty seconded, and the Board entered into Executive Session at 4:26 p.m.

Trustee Sasiadek motioned to exit Executive Session, Trustee Panty seconded, and Executive Session ended at 4:48 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Next, Director Spears introduced proposed Resolution 2024-30 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2024-30
Authorization to Negotiate Settlement—Personnel Matter

WHEREAS, in October 2024, an employee resigned from employment with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL), and

WHEREAS, the employee has notified the B&ECPL of allegations of past improper employment practices, and

WHEREAS, the B&ECPL's Director and Assistant Deputy Director—Human Resources recommend engaging in settlement discussions, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Library Director, or his designee, to negotiate a settlement in this matter, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Library Director, or his designee, to transfer budget funds as necessary to accomplish payment of settlement.

Trustee Bedenko motioned for approval, Trustee T. Johnson seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Sasiadek with a second by Trustee T. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Moore
Secretary