

PROPOSED  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
April 17, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, April 17, at the Central Library and remotely pursuant to due notice to trustees. The following members were present:

Carima El-Behairy, Chair  
Christopher Sasiadek, Esq., Vice Chair  
John D. Craik, Esq., Treasurer  
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq., Secretary  
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.  
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS  
Kimberly Johnson  
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.  
Joel C. Moore, Esq.  
Elaine Panty

Chair El-Behairy called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum was present.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. Director John Spears shared that there will be an additional resolution added under Agenda Item J.2 – New Business titled proposed Resolution 2025-12 - Erie County 2026 Capital Project Request Guidance. Physical copies were presented to the Board. Trustee Bedenko motioned to accept the changes to the agenda. Trustee Craik seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of March 20, 2025. Members reviewed and proposed corrections to several grammatical errors. It was agreed that these corrections will be made. Trustee Sasiadek motioned to approve the Minutes as amended. Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report by reminding the Board of a Library fundraiser slated for Friday, May 9, titled *In Conversation*. The event is meant to celebrate intellectual freedom and highlight the essential role of libraries in our communities. She encouraged Board members to get their tickets to the event which will be held at The Admiral Room, located at 237 Main St. Buffalo, New York 14203. Following that, Chair El-Behairy informed the Board that the Budget and Finance Committee will be meeting immediately following the Board meeting, and welcomed the Board and members of the audience to join if they wanted to.

## Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Trustee Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below. Trustee Sasiadek wanted to add that appointments and reappointments to the Board were also discussed. He also wanted to share that if all goes according to plan, the Board will be at full strength, and there will be no expired terms. Discussion ensued regarding Board appointments and reappointments.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee  
April 10, 2025

Present: Executive Committee Chair Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek, and members Lucy Candelario, Sharon Kelly, and Elaine Panty. Also present were Deputy Director – Public Services, Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Angela Marinucci, and Assistant to the Director, Caitlin Goodrich

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

Chair El-Behairy began the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda for the Board meeting on Thursday, April 17. Chair El-Behairy stated that Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation can be omitted since the Foundation is not planning to report until the May Board meeting. Next, Deputy Director – COO, Marinucci proposed that Agenda Item E.2.a – Approve New York State Annual Reports be moved to Agenda Item K – New Business. This was agreed upon by members of the Executive Committee.

Following that, Trustee Panty shared that she will have a Contracting Library Liaison Report from the Kenmore Branch Library. Chair El-Behairy stated she will also have one from the Angola Public Library.

Member Candelario arrived at 4:07 p.m.

For Report of the Chair, Chair El-Behairy stated that she will discuss the *Rona D & Friends Author Talk & Book Signing* event that took place at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on Saturday, April 5. She shared that the event was wonderful, and authors Rona D., Iris Bolling, and Brenda Jackson were friendly and excited to be there. Discussion ensued regarding the authors, where they draw inspiration from, and the event in general. Following that, Chair El-Behairy stated she will be reminding Board members to purchase their tickets for the *In Conversation* event featuring New York Times bestselling author Susan Orlean, and former editor-in-chief of the Buffalo News, Margaret Sullivan on Friday, May 9 at the Admiral Room. Discussion ensued about the event and how to purchase tickets.

Next, Chair El-Behairy shared that the Budget and Finance Committee will be meeting after the Board meeting on Thursday, April 17. Discussion ensued about when committee meetings are scheduled. Following that, Deputy Director – COO, Marinucci went into further detail about approving New York State annual reports, and stated she will talk more about them at the Board meeting.

Following that, Chair El-Behairy stated that she is working on appointments and reappointments of Board members.

There being no further business, Trustee Sasiadek motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Candelario seconded. The meeting ended at 4:14 p.m.

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

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik summarized the monthly financial report ending on February 28, 2025. She also reminded the Board of the Budget and Finance Committee meeting immediately following the Board meeting. The agenda was posted on the Library's website. Discussion ensued about the monthly financial report. Trustee Sasiadek asked about a specific line on the monthly financial report relating to Library charges and fees. Discussion ensued regarding charges and fees still being collected since the Library's *Fine Free Initiative*.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Director Spears began his report by announcing that the Rare Book Room will be having a grand opening of their new exhibit, *What Does It All Mean? Exploring the Dictionary*, shortly after the Board meeting from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. followed by a small reception. He encouraged Board members and audience members to attend. Next, Director Spears encouraged everyone to attend the *In Conversation* event scheduled for Friday, May 9 at the Admiral Room.

Following that, Director Spears shared information on what has been transpiring with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). As discussed previously, an Executive Order was issued calling for the elimination of the IMLS and six other Federal agencies. Director Spears stated that there have been a number of questions given these agencies were established by Congress. As of now, the statutory requirements of IMLS are being continued, however, at the barest level possible. Funding for the IMLS was approved in a continuing resolution, however, that only goes until September 2025. Discussion ensued regarding the IMLS and the Office of Management and Budget. Next, Director Spears stated that 90% of the Library budget comes from Erie County property taxes. The Federal funding the Library typically receives is through E-Rate and occasional grants. Discussion ensued regarding funding, IMLS, potential lasting impacts, advocacy efforts, and outreach.

Finally, Director Spears shared that the *5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition*, which includes the Buffalo History Museum, is planning on creating a

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The intent of the MOU is to ensure the longevity of the initiative and clarify who is representing the organizations that are a part of the *5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition*.

Trustee Panty asked about the New York State Construction Aid and the New York State budget. Discussion ensued about the Senate, Assembly, and Executive budgets.

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

### **B&ECPL Monthly Report March 2025**

A community celebration and media event was held for the reopening and mural unveiling at the Isaías Gonzalez-Soto Branch Library in Buffalo on March 29. Speakers included Library Director **John Spears**, New York State Assemblyman Jon Rivera, Buffalo Common Councilmember David Rivera, Buffalo Mayor Christopher P. Scanlon, Erie County Legislator Lawrence Dupre, New York State Senator Sean Ryan, Executive Director of Arts Services Inc. Jen Swan-Kilpatrick, President of Hispanic Heritage Council of WNY Casimiro D. Rodriguez Sr., Mural artist Angelee Vargas, González-Soto Library Branch Manager **Christine Webb**, and family members of Isaías González-Soto. The celebration, attended by many, included live music, refreshments, a movie and craft activities. The story was covered by WGRZ- TV Channel 2 and The Buffalo News.

**International Transgender Day of Visibility** – Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** hosted a lecture for *International Transgender Day of Visibility* on March 31 in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library, presented by the Buffalo-Niagara LGBTQ+ History Project titled *Trans Buffalo: A History, 1900-Present*. Attendees heard about the lives of some trans men and women who made Buffalo their home, and learned about groundbreaking books and other resources that help to tell the Buffalo story.

**Digitize New York** - The New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B), with the support of the Pomeroy Foundation, installed a new Copibook OS A2 scanner in the Grosvenor Room in preparation of the partnership with NYG&B on their *Digitize New York* initiative to establish a Digitization Center in Buffalo. NYG&B volunteers will begin digitizing items from local cultural heritage institutions. Special Collections staff will have access to the machine to complete Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's scanning projects when volunteers are not present. Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman**, named a "Partner in the Field" for 2024 by the NYG&B for her ideas, conceived of this partnership. The Library's Maintenance, Shipping, and Information Technology Departments provided assistance in this endeavor.

**Oral History** - Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** and Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** hosted Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Co-Founder of the Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women in the Ring of

Knowledge at the Central Library on March 1, to celebrate the addition of the *Say Their Names: Honor Their Legacies* oral history project to Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's digital collections. These videos capture first-person interviews with elders of the African American community in Western New York.

**Women's History Month** – As part of a System-wide sponsored program celebrating *Women's History Month*, local author Amanda Woomer provided a presentation on the *Spiritualists & the Suffragists* at the Clarence Public Library and Julia Boyer Reinstein Library. The Central Library hosted viewings of *My So-Called Selfish Life*, a documentary by award winning filmmaker Therese Shechter who uses humor as a political tool to convey the myths of parenthood, and *Clarissa's Battle*, a documentary set in Oakland, California, that focuses on Clarissa Doutherd, a single mother fighting for accessible and affordable child care and early education for all. Both documentaries were also available virtually for patrons throughout the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System.

## 1. Public Services

### Central Library:

The recurring program Pint-Sized Picassos, primarily run by Children's Department Manager **Dan Lewandowski** and Librarian **Erin M. Burke**, took place every Saturday afternoon in March. The program featured craft activities with open guidelines, encouraging kids to learn through experimentation and play. An example was 'smush butterflies,' where kids were given a butterfly printout, added splotches of paint to it, then folded it in half and rubbed it to spread the paint around, creating a pattern when they unfolded it. This demonstrated the concepts of mixing colors and symmetry.

Over the course of two days, on March 26 and 27, Librarians **Dan Lewandowski** and **Jennifer Lelinski**, and Library Assistant **Alyssa Johnson**, hosted the entire second grade from Forest Elementary School. Over 100 students, teachers, and parents came to visit the Central Library where the theme of our visit was stories. Stories included books such as *The Book with No Pictures* by B. J. Novak and *Beverly Billingsly Borrows a Book* by Alexander Stadler. Children who signed up for library cards ahead of time were able to check out books from the library. The Children's Department has been seeing many children, who were not able to obtain library cards during their school visit, come back to the Central Library later with their families, to get cards and enjoy the library.

On March 7, Teen Services Library Assistant **Sarah Barry** hosted the Monthly Teen Advisory Group (TAG) with eight members of the group in attendance. The group began planning and constructing games for an egg hunt event that will be held in conjunction with the Children's Room on April 12.

March 29 - In collaboration with Esther Neisen from Lumpy Buttons Craft Shop, Technology Clerk **Amanda Brown** hosted a Craft Swap Special Edition of the Stitch Circle program, at which patrons could donate craft supplies that they aren't using for

ones that might serve them better. Amazingly, 131 patrons came to swap craft supplies with fellow community members!

### **Buffalo Branches:**

#### **Panty Programming Highlights:**

The monthly “Guess How Many... Guessing Jar Game” was very challenging this month, using a variety of pretzel shapes and sizes, which generated a lot of positive feedback. Participants placed their guess between March 7 and March 21, with 33 people participating. The correct number was 456 and the winning guess was 500.

The Elaine M. Panty Library staff hosted a Family Board Game Event on March 15, where board games were set out in the community room for a day and families were encouraged to walk-in and play at their leisure. Game options included chess, checkers, Uno, Sorry!, Fluxx, Jenga, Yahtzee, Pete the Cat, Go Fish, a variety of jigsaw puzzles, and more.

March monthly take and make crafts for children featured St. Patrick’s Day shamrocks, a 3D frog on a lily pad, tic-tac-toe boards (which were graciously donated by a patron), and caterpillars. Staff prepared and distributed 52 craft kits throughout the month.

The semi-annual Really Really Free Market was yet again a very popular event at the Elaine M. Panty Library. Co-hosted by Branch Manager **Stefanie Anawald** and the Black Rock Riverside Alliance (BRRA), folks came with items such as toys, bed sheets, clothes, jewelry, crafting supplies, decorations, puzzles, and small household appliances, many of which successfully found new homes. There were dozens of families who contributed, and we estimate there were between 75 and 100 “shoppers” throughout the 2 hour-long event that took place on March 29.

Branch Manager **Stefanie Anawald** hosted the monthly No Pressure Book Club on March 31. Attendees enjoyed light refreshments while sharing and discussing books read throughout the month. Genres included bestsellers, classics, historical fiction, mystery/thrillers, non-fiction, and crafting.

Senior Pages **Justin Quick** and **Barb Chase** created an in-branch spring-themed scavenger hunt in the children’s section. Participants had to find hidden flowers, each of which revealed a letter, then use the letters to decode a secret message. Correct answers were turned in for a prize. During March there were 12 correct secret messages turned in. The scavenger hunt will continue into April.

#### **North Park Programming Highlights:**

Senior Page **Byanca Temmons-Barnwell** ran the all-ages Craft n’ Chat group held on the first Friday of the month. While the group focused on crochet, Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** prepped a felt shamrock bookmark craft for people who wanted to participate but did not want to learn to crochet.

On March 8, ten patrons attended the Build-a-Bird-House program with the Buffalo Audubon Society. Not all registrants showed up, but staff were able to fill up the last two spaces with a grandmother and grandchild who happened to be visiting North Park that day. Due to this opportunity, the patrons said they would be looking out more for crafting programs because they didn't know libraries hosted such events.



*Photo – Child holding a birdhouse from North Park's Build-a-Bird House program.*

Part-time Librarian **Erin Dunn** hosted the Afternoon Tea Book club on March 10. Participants discussed the novel *Station Eleven* Emily St. John Mandel. Tea and snacks were provided.

The second Taco Trials Winter Reading Challenge wrapped up on March 14, with 65 kids registered and 98 tickets turned in. Ninety eight tickets equates to a total of 194 hours of reading. This year's challenge was officially sponsored by Mighty Taco. They provided restaurant coupons, a variety of prizes, and allowed us to post program flyers in the restaurant around the corner from the North Park Branch Library. Several families told staff they came in to sign up specifically after seeing it advertised in the restaurant. Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** designed the challenge and reached out to Mighty Taco about the official sponsorship. This included a summarizing graphic of participation to send to their Director of Community Affairs who helped facilitate the sponsorship. The participation for this program increased from 16 in 2024 to 65 in 2025.

On March 15, Yoga Parkside held a beginner-friendly yoga class in North Park's meeting room, free of charge, after an email correspondence with part-time Librarian **Erin Dunn**.

Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** ran a Pizza Plant-It program, on March 25, and was assisted by Senior Page **Byanca Temmons-Barnwell**. Participants painted a pot, picked out a cactus, and enjoyed a slice of pizza together to celebrate spring. Alyssa wrote care cards for each of the cacti that participants could choose from, including pickle cactus, panda paws, and zebra haworthia. There were a mix of ages from toddler to

adult. Among the participants were six teenagers who were part of a youth group outing from the Buffalo Family Help Center. **Alyssa** plans a future adaptation of the program but was pleased with the interest and turn-out.



*Photo – A decorated, potted plant from the Pizza Plant-It program at North Park Branch Library.*

Part-time Librarian **Erin Dunn** and volunteer Annemarie alternated the weekly storytime on March 6, 13, 20, and 27. A total of 87 patrons attended throughout the month. Extra special participants at North Park storytimes were Mindy, an SPCA Paws for Love golden retriever, and her human David who join the group each week.

Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** put together 40 Books & Bevs adult take-and-makes which were all distributed before the end of the month. March's beverage sample was a green tea and the book pairing was *Normal People* by Sally Rooney.

Senior Library Clerk **Suzanna Krauszer** put up the St Patrick's Day scavenger hunt in the kids' section at the beginning of the month. One hundred and eight kids completed the scavenger hunt throughout the month of March.

North Park Library distributed a total of 223 take and make craft bags for kids in March. Senior Library Clerk **Suzanna Krauszer**, part-time Librarian **Erin Dunn**, and Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark** worked together to create this popular offering.

#### **System Services:**

**Genealogy Training** – A group of Girl Scouts and their parents visited the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library for a *Genealogy Scavenger Hunt* on March 2. **Rhonda Hoffman** led the event that included using microfilmed newspapers, looking up surnames in name dictionaries, searching census records, and using the local history file. The scouts also went home with a take-and-make *Family History* craft. **Rhonda** taught the online class, *Genealogy Guided: Ancestry DNA* on March 12. The Special Collections Department co-hosted a *Research Day* with the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State on March 22. **Rhonda** provided a tour of the Grosvenor Room



followed by hands-on instruction in the TechKnow Lab of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's digital resources, databases, and Special Collections webpage for the genealogists in attendance. She also hosted a *Break Your Brick Walls* virtual session on March 26, with the Choose Your Genealogy Adventure group.

**Health and Wellness** - System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** coordinated the monthly *Wellness @ Central* tabling event held at the Central Library on March 22. Twenty-two local agencies shared information with patrons to help with food insecurity, healthcare, legal resources, and more.

**Reentry Fair** - Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** facilitated the Spectrum Health & Human Services *Reentry Fair* at the Central Library on March 21. Many community partners including, Univera Health, Back to Basics Ministries, Endeavor Health Services, FeedMore WNY, and the Osborne Association, a New York City based organization, which works with families of incarcerated individuals, participated. Forty community members attended the event and connected with resources to assist themselves or family with their reentry.

**University at Buffalo (UB) Humanities Series** - Amy Graves Monroe, Marco Faini, and Stephanie Schmidt, Professors at the University at Buffalo's (UB) Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, presented a lecture on *Eclipses in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: Aztecs, Nostradamus, and Armies of Butterflies* on March 14 in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library. Patrons were also able to view books from the Rare Book collection.

#### **Tours and Visits:**

Over the course of six days, **Heather Gring** provided a personalized curator's tour of the outgoing *Rare Books 101* exhibit in the Rare Book Room at the Central Library. Patrons explored some highlights of the Rare Book collections, including the Shakespeare first folio, ancient Sumerian tablets, and Roycroft publications on display. **Heather** hosted the Park School of Buffalo History Club for a Special Collections tour on March 20. Students explored local history, map and newspaper collections. She also provided a tour of the Grosvenor Room with staff members of the CEPA (Center for Exploratory and Perceptual) Gallery on March 24.

#### **Outreach:**

Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** was invited to the **International Institute of Buffalo** and presented on Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's library services and resources on March 6. Additionally, **Kuniko** delivered library cards which Adult Services Clerk **Virginia Fryson** processed for the event. After the presentation, **Kuniko** participated in the Job Club graduation ceremony and chatted with staff regarding recent changes in IIB.



*Photos – Two photos; one includes “welcome” in various languages, and the other photo includes participants from the Job Club graduation ceremony from IIB.*

On March 27, Teen Librarian **Kelly Woods** attended the GLYS Conference with Librarian Trainee **Amealia Brousseau**. They tabled at the event where they gave away free books and bracelets. They talked to participants about how to apply for a Student Digital Library Card and the library resources that can be accessed with it. **Kelly** and **Amealia** also hosted a workshop at the conference entitled “Book Bites” which allowed for a facilitated, timed, round-robin style way to learn a bit about each LGBTQ-themed book.

Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** and Technology Clerk **Amanda Brown** attended STEM Night at Heritage Heights Elementary School on March 19. They promoted the Launch Pad and general Library services and provided a button-making craft and laser-cutting demonstrations for 120 kids and adults.



*Photo – Technology Clerk **Amanda Brown** standing behind a table with button makers, and other various crafting supplies.*

Mobile Services Librarian **Jennifer Block** and Mobile Services Senior Page **Loch McLaughlin** provided tabling at the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) #301 Burgard High School's *Saturday Academy* on March 1.

**Andrew Maines** and Mobile Services Senior Page **Mary Bridgens** attended the *Let's Glow Reading Family Literacy Night* at Days Park Elmwood Village Charter School on March 4. Over 100 students and families visited the Bookmobile, and learned about services provided by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

**Jennifer** and Mobile Services Librarian Trainee **Olivia Adams** participated in Dodge Elementary School's new *Arts & Letters* first grade curriculum on March 5. The Bookmobile was asked to participate in their "Why are books important?" module. One question in this module was "True or False: Some libraries are moving libraries that travel to bring people books." **Jennifer** and **Olivia** provided a brief presentation in the school's auditorium to kindergartners and first grade students, with the first grade students coming onto the Bookmobile in small groups for brief tours. In addition, **Jennifer** and **Olivia** answered many questions and showed the students how to check out and discharge books.

**Olivia** and **Mary** attended the Lackawanna High School *Saturday Academy Book Bonanza* on March 8. The event featured book and literary-themed activities, including a cookie decoration station, button making, and open-mic poetry readings.

**Jennifer** and **Loch** attended the BPS #50 North Buffalo Community School's *All Aboard for Reading Saturday Academy* on March 22. Forty-six patrons braved the weather to explore the Bookmobile, return materials, and learn about Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System resources.

**Susan Buttaccio** and **Heather Gring** presented to members of the Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD) at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on March 8, about the ongoing work of the 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition's *Oral History Project*. BGSAD members learned about resources available to create oral history interviews and the Coalition's efforts to collect the stories of those impacted by the racially motivated murder of ten people at the Tops Market on Jefferson Avenue on May 14, 2022.

**Jacob Rachwal** attended the *Community Wellness Day* at the Southtowns YMCA in West Seneca. He distributed information on Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's healthy living resources, downloading and streaming services such as Libby and Hoopla, and provided library card applications to those in attendance. Many people stopped by just to say that they love the library.

TechKnow Lab Librarian **Brendan Chella** visited the Lancaster Senior Center, Dorothy J. Collier Community Center, Tosh Collins Senior Center, and the Veterans One-stop Center throughout the month to provide technology training. Additionally, TechKnow Lab Library Assistant **Isabell Berger** visited the Hamburg Senior Center to teach a class on *iPad-iPhone Settings*.

## 2. Collection Development

### Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	3,086	7,237	379	796	510,652
Young Adult Print	462	1,031	114	241	69,302
Adult Print	4,109	9,685	827	1,972	1,765,501
Media	1,975	7,011	205	1,188	515,555
Other*	2,096	5,149	14	34	172,818
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11,728</b>	<b>30,113</b>	<b>1,539</b>	<b>4,231</b>	<b>3,033,828</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

### Electronic Collections\*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	3,516	12,677	1,392	4,575	126,408
eAudiobooks	5,395	23,917	386	1,191	67,736
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,764
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8,911</b>	<b>36,594</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>5,766</b>	<b>193,908</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>20,639</b>	<b>66,707</b>	<b>3,317</b>	<b>9,997</b>	<b>3,227,736</b>

**Rare Books and Special Collections** – Rare Book and Map Librarian **Charles Alaimo** provided images and information on Buffalo & Erie County Public Library’s early copies of the *Book of Mormon* (1830 and 1840) for the **Book of Mormon Census Project**. This ongoing academic (and online) endeavor hopes to provide details about the surviving copies of the earliest editions of this work. The Library’s copies will be added to the Book of Mormon’s Census website in the upcoming weeks. Shantelle Patton, CEO of That Brown Bag Minority Business Directory LLC, is in the process of custom printing all volumes of *That Brown Bag* directory; Special Collections Librarian **Elizabeth (Libby) Stengel** will coordinate acquisition once printing is completed.

## 3. Fundraising

### Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – March 31, 2025	\$213,694.09

***Highlights:***

The *In Conversation* fundraiser, in partnership with the Library Foundation, is confirmed for Friday, May 9. The evening will be a conversation between Susan Orlean, bestselling author of *The Library Book* and Margaret Sullivan, former editor-in-chief of *The Buffalo News* and public editor of *The New York Times*. Sponsorships are available. This will be a ticketed fundraiser. Tickets can be purchased at: <https://ways2give.buffalolib.org/inconversation2025>. Contact Maureen Germaine at [germainem@buffalolib.org](mailto:germainem@buffalolib.org) with any questions.

*Scaling Community Through Archives* grant was submitted for the Grosvenor Room. The grant for \$7,000, if approved, will help enhance the Library's community archives through outreach into the community.

Mass email sent in March:

*This March at Your Library*– was sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 90,000), 40% open rate.

#### **4. Facilities/Funding**

On March 5, Library and County DPW personnel met with Millennium Construction to discuss the restart of the loading dock concrete rehabilitation. Discussion topics involved reinstallation of the fire door, specifying saw cut locations along the walls, clarification on the repair of several patches due to damage during demolition, and an updated construction schedule. Millennium agreed to be back on site Monday, March 24 to restart their work.

On March 6, Library staff met with Watts Architecture for a status meeting regarding the Central Library roof replacement and green roof/solar installation project. Employees of EDR, a professional vegetative roofing company, were also in attendance. Maintenance plan options were discussed and tasks such as weeding, cleaning, reseeding, and soil check frequencies were clarified. The use of a professional green roof maintenance company was also recommended. Following that meeting, Library maintenance and facility staff accompanied Watts to a meeting with the City of Buffalo Permit & Inspections Office to review the initial footprint of the green roof and ensure all city fire codes were in compliance. The City had no initial concerns with the project at that point.

On March 7, Library staff, EC DPW staff, Resetarits Corp., Goodwin Electric, and Trautman Associates held an Egress Project meeting. Goodwin equipment submittals had been returned and accepted, and the construction schedule was adjusted slightly due to lead times on equipment. Resetarits noted that the installation of the interior security film was nearly 70% complete and are looking at a springtime start for the exterior window film installation. Exit signage locations were also specified on Tiers A & B.

On March 13, Zaxis Architecture and the Library held a pre-bid walkthrough at the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library in advance of the HVAC replacement project. This meeting allowed potential companies to visually inspect the area of proposed work and gain more information on the project in advance of their proposal submissions. Bids openings were scheduled for March 26 at 11 AM.

From March 22 – March 26, Library and EC DPW staff reviewed submitted proposals for the Central Library Architecture and Engineering Term Contract, due to the current contract ending in June 2025. The major scope of this contract would include the Central Library building envelope rehabilitation and the replacement of the Central chillers and cooling towers. Five proposals were reviewed, scored, and ranked. The committee met on March 26 to review individual rankings and compile an overall ranking of the firms to submit to the County for approval.

On March 26, the bids for the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch HVAC Replacement were opened. There was only one bid submitted, which was rejected due to formalities with the submission. Furthermore, the proposal was significantly higher than the current budget would allow. The Library and the City of Buffalo intend to rebid this work with an extension to the project schedule.

**New York State Budget Running Late** – As of April 7, New York State has not yet enacted a 2025-26 budget, which was due on April 1.

**One House Budgets Encouraging** – In mid-March, the NY State Assembly and Senate released their proposed changes to the Governor’s Budget Proposal, also known as “one house budgets.” The proposals below:

	<b>Governor Proposed</b>	<b>Senate Proposed</b>	<b>Assembly Proposed</b>
<b>Operating Aid:</b>	\$104,600,000	\$109,600,000 (+5 million)	\$107,100,000 (+2.5 mil.)
<b>Construction Aid:</b>		\$34,000,000	\$54,000,000 (+20
million)	\$68,000,000 (+34 mil.)		

The Governor’s Budget Proposal increased the Library Operating Aid by \$2.5 million and decreased Construction Aid \$10 million dollars from prior year’s level. The Governor’s Budget Proposal also includes \$3 million to ensure continued access to the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVELny), a free online library of magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, research, and reference books available to all New Yorkers. The Senate’s proposed budgets also include additional funding in School Library Materials Aid, an increase from \$6.25 per pupil to \$11.33 per pupil and the Assembly’s including an increase to \$11.50 per pupil. As of April 7, 2025, we are still waiting for the adopted budget but remain optimistic. The Legislature’s recommendations would both restore and improve Library funding, which has been at a deficit in previous years.

## 5. Staff Development

**Staff Members Attend 3-Part Coaching Conversations Workshop with Erie County -** On 3/4, 3/11, and 3/18, five B&ECPL supervisors participated in an in-person training series called "Coaching Conversations" that was hosted by Edge Foundation in partnership with Erie County at their 43 Court Street training facilities. Workshop attendees learned how to execute successful coaching conversations with their staff, how to interact with others more productively with the use of coaching skills, and how to implement steps to create a coaching habit as a part of their ongoing supervisory practice. **Alyssa Clark, Rosalyn Damico, Zoe Grimes, Kuniko Simon and Christine Webb** all completed this course. This free learning opportunity was made possible through an ongoing collaboration between Erie County and B&ECPL's Staff Development teams.

**Mental Health First Aid Certification Online Training Series Concludes-** Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a nationally recognized training program developed by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing that teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders. In partnership with the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) and their certified online trainers, we were able to offer five certification opportunities over the course of three months, which concluded in March. B&ECPL now has 57 staff members from across the system who completed the 7-hour course, and who are now MHFA-certified for the next three years. **Maria Lowe** and **Aaron Swan** were key collaborators in this program, putting many of their staff members through the course, which included the whole of the Central Library Security department. This program was provided free-of-charge by MCOE through one of their grants. We will continue to partner with MCOE on future learning opportunities.

**"Words in the Workplace" Communication Wellness Series Incentive Program Winners Announced-** In October we launched an online training series for all employees that was facilitated by EviCore, which is Erie County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) partners. This six-part program included a variety of topics that aimed to help everyone in every role across the system improve their communication skills. Recordings of all six webinars were posted to the Staff Intranet for on-demand use. Anyone who attended all six dates (live or recorded) and completed a short reflection by the end of February was entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of two \$50 gift cards from Target, with prizes courtesy of EviCore. In the end, 26 staff members finished all six sessions and reflections, with 213 sessions viewed and reflections submitted overall, which includes those who watched the full series and any partial participants. The winners of the gift cards were announced in March—congratulations to **Emily Laufer** of Kenilworth Library and **Valerie Gee** of Newstead Library!

**Webinars -** Staff members attended an assortment of webinars and other online learning programs in March, with several employees going to these offerings: *AncestryDNA: What's New? Tips & Tricks* (from AncestryDNA.com), *Cardholder Signup Policies: Access in Practice* (from Northern New York Library Network), *How Your*

*Library Can Alleviate Hunger Now* (from NYS Library and Hunger Solutions NY),  
*Patrolling the Stacks: Responding to Activity by ICE & Other Law Enforcement Agencies at Your Library* (from Empire State Library Network) and *Growing Relationships as a Manager* (from LinkedIn Learning).

## 6. Communications

### Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Earned Media	WKBW TV News interviewed Children's Librarian <b>Dan Lewandowski</b> interviewed about the importance of reading to children	March 10, 2025 <a href="#">Link</a>
Earned Media	East Aurora Bee: Buffalo Dance Center partners with Elma Library to offer free toddler dance class	March 20, 2025
Earned Media	Ken-Ton Bee: Public art grant secured for Town of Tonawanda Library	March 26, 2025 <a href="#">LINK</a>
Press Release	Community Celebrates Library Reopening and New Murals at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library	March 29, 2025 <a href="#">LINK</a>
Earned Media	All WNY News: Community celebrates Isaías González-Soto Branch Library reopening and new murals	March 29, 2025 <a href="#">LINK</a>
Earned Media	WGRZ: New mural on display at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library in Buffalo	March 29, 2025 <a href="#">LINK</a>

### Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	109	297	2,780	8,506	134	14,446
Flickr	-	-	2,810	8,352	-	59
Google Ads <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	2,675	8,675	N/A	N/A



<b>Instagram</b>	15	56	2,419	23,678	127	7,534
<b>Pinterest</b>	39	90	66	193	-5	2,047
<b>Twitter (X)</b>	35	119	52	413	-28	10,517
<b>Bluesky</b>	11	54	59	298	68	1,084
<b>YouTube</b>	5	18	1,612	7,583	12	780
<b>TikTok</b>	-	1	654	2,132	2	1,026
<b>Total</b>	214	635	13,127	59,830	310	37,493

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

## 7. Partnerships

**Children's Centers in the Courts** - System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** and System Youth Outreach Services Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** dropped off 200 books to the YWCA Children's Centers at the Erie County Family Court. The books, donated by Project Flight, will be distributed to both the Children's Centers in Erie County Family Court and Buffalo City Courts.

**Erie County - Libby Stengel, Heather Gring**, and Rare Book Clerk **Andrew Semo** met with Mark Cornell, Erie County Director of Budget and Management on March 5, to discuss housing and preservation of old Erie County budget documents.

**Journey's End Refugee Services - Brendan Chella** established a partnership with Journey's End Refugee Services to provide technology classes for their clientele beginning in May.

**Project Flight** - System Adult Outreach Services Librarian and BookBank Manager for Project Flight **Melissa Blattner**, Dr. Geraldine Bard and Dr. Elizabeth Cappella, Co-Directors of Project Flight, and Christopher Hulsman, Electronic & Educational Resources Librarian at Buffalo State University attended the *International Education Research Symposium* held at St. Anne's College, Oxford, England from March 21 through March 25. They provided a presentation on *Promoting Altruism Through Literacy, Volunteerism, and Service-Learning Programs to Enhance Social Justice, Equity, and Peace* on March 21 as part of the symposium.

**Shakespeare in Delaware Park - Susan Buttaccio, Heather Gring**, and Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** met with representatives at the Road Less Traveled Theater and Shakespeare in Delaware Park to explore ways to commemorate the outdoor theater company's 50th anniversary this year.

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

- **Buffalo Museum of Science**
- **Child Care Resource Network**
- **Colored Musicians Club**
- **Erie County Historical Commission**

- **Investigative Post**
- **Just Buffalo Literary Center**
- **Live Well Erie Working Groups**
- **Outreach Coordinators in New York's Public Library Systems**
- **Project Flight**
- **The Music Performance Trust Fund/ Buffalo Musicians Association**
- **Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees**
- **Youth Services Consultants in New York's Public Library Systems**

## 8. Planning for the Future

**Chelsey Lonberger** reached out on March 17 to the City of Buffalo Mayor's Office and the Police Athletic League (PAL) of Buffalo, known as Buffalo PAL, to ask if the *Reading Rules! Kids' Summer Reading Challenge* created by former Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown was going to take place this year. Although this will not continue, there is an ongoing push for literacy in place of this with a public announcement coming in April. **Chelsey** informed them that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was interested in collaborating with them on their literacy efforts and would assist where needed. Subsequently, at the request of Nekia Kemp, Executive Director of Buffalo PAL, **Chelsey** provided her with resources for the creation of a citywide Spelling Bee.

**Libby Stengel**, Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton**, and Assistant Library Display Artist **Helen Shandraw** met with Ted Nizialek, President of the Buffalo Harbor Museum on March 25, to discuss a partnership for the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's upcoming Erie Canal exhibit titled, *The Erie Canal & Buffalo: An Enduring Legacy*. Items in the Buffalo Harbor Museum collection, including photographs, will be included in the exhibit.

## 9. Director Activities

### List of Meetings and Events

Attended by Director John Spears

March 2025

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
March 1, 2025	Event - Celebrating the Say Their Names, Honor Their Legacies Project with Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold at Central Library
March 3, 2025	Event - The Space She Keeps: The Women of Martin House
March 3, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Administrative Team with Frank Ciccio
March 5 to March 13, 2025	Out of Office
March 11, 2025	Virtual Meeting - PULISDO
March 13, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Judy Fachko, and Emily Patronik
March 13, 2025	Meeting - Executive Committee

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March 14, 2025	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
March 14, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 15, 2025	Orientation - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
March 17, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 17, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik and Maria Lowe
March 18, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 18, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci and Aaron Swan
March 18, 2025	Meeting - ErieNet Audit and Finance Committee
March 18, 2025	Meeting - ErieNet
March 18, 2025	Annual Meeting and Presentation - ErieNet
March 19, 2025	Virtual Meeting - New York State Library
March 19, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Chautauqua Institution
March 19, 2025	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
March 19, 2025	Virtual Meeting - NYLA Legislative Committee
March 19, 2025	Meeting - Library Foundation
March 20, 2025	Virtual Meeting - 2025 MetLib Conference Planning Committee
March 20, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 20, 2025	Virtual Meeting - PLS Directors
March 20, 2025	Meeting - B&ECPL Board of Trustees
March 21, 2025	Meeting - Sheryl Knab, WNYLRC
March 22, 2025	Annual Workshop - Association of Contracting Libraries
March 24, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 25, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 25, 2025	Virtual Meeting - COPE Standing Committee
March 25, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
March 25, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Majority Leader Peoples-Stokes Legislative Director
March 27, 2025	Virtual Townhall - American Library Association
March 28, 2025	Meeting - Dorinda Darden
March 28, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 29, 2025	Event - Isaías González-Soto Branch Library Grand Reopening and Mural Reveal
March 31, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team

## Appendices

### A. Monthly Statistics

#### System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	1253	3534	3803	10340
Children 5 and under	1221	3781	5433	15784
Children 6-11	2753	7591	4568	13880
Intergenerational/Combined	6212	16279	12255	29684
Teens	338	872	576	1601
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>11777</b>	<b>32057</b>	<b>26635</b>	<b>71289</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>11777</b>	<b>32057</b>	<b>26635</b>	<b>71289</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	22	51	409	698
Children 5 and under	0	3	0	39
Children 6-11	1	3	124	149
Intergenerational/Combined	5	15	44	159
Teens	13	22	39	50
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>1095</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	4	11	191	1321
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	7	326	1121
Intergenerational/Combined	9	24	1360	3190
Teens	0	0	0	0
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1877</b>	<b>5632</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>2493</b>	<b>6727</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>11833</b>	<b>32193</b>	<b>29128</b>	<b>78016</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, Wi-Fi usage, and program attendance and a summary of open hours can be found at <https://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/2025-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

Agenda Item G – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the *ACT Workshop* held at the Central Library was a success. Attendees were engaged, and happy to be present. She thanked

Deputy Director – Public Services, Dorinda Darden for her help in organizing the event. The last meeting of ACT will be on Saturday, May 31 at the Clarence Public Library. Finally, Martha Buyer shared that the Aurora Town Library has invited Congressman Nick Langworthy to read to children at one of their story time events. She hopes that other libraries will be interested inviting their representatives to do the same.

Agenda Item G.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Panty attended the Town of Tonawanda Library Board meeting at the Kenmore Branch Library. Discussion ensued about their proposed mural, and other library-related matters. Next, Chair El-Behairy shared that she went to the Angola Public Library. Discussion ensued about their annual hotdog fundraiser on Saturday, June 14. Chair El-Behairy also shared how beautiful the mural is at Isaías González-Soto Branch Library, and encouraged everyone to stop by.

Agenda Item H – Public Comment. Chair El-Behairy read and clarified the rules for public comment. Odessa Hunter shared her concerns regarding the computer lab at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library. She also asked that a comment/suggestion box be placed at the library in order to ensure patron questions or comments are received even if the Branch Manager is unavailable. Odessa Hunter also provided a copy of a letter she wrote with suggestions to be delivered to Director Spears. Finally she thanked Director Spears for apologizing in the past for how she was treated at the Library.

Agenda Item I – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item J – New Business.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-11– Approve New York State Annual Reports. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer (COO) Angela Marinucci summarized proposed Resolution 2025-11 as presented below.

#### RESOLUTION 2025-11

WHEREAS, the Library System Basic Aid, Local Library Services Aid, Local Services Support Aid, Central Library Services Aid, Coordinated Outreach Library Services Aid, State Correctional Facilities Aid and Services to County Jails (Interinstitutional) Aid are annual New York State statutory aid programs aimed at assisting library systems, central libraries, and local libraries in developing collections and providing services to their constituents and have provided significant funding for many years, and

WHEREAS, in order to maintain the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's charter as well as qualify for State Aid funds, the B&ECPL must file reports annually with

New York State Library's Division of Library Development summarizing achievements, activity, and financial performance, and

WHEREAS, the B&ECPL files both a Public Library Report and a Library System Report, while each contract library also files a Public Library Report, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, the B&ECPL Board of Trustees assures the B&ECPL *Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries – 2024* has been reviewed and accepted and assures the Library operated under its approved Plan of Service in accordance with the provisions of Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner, and be it further

RESOLVED, the B&ECPL Board of Trustees assures the *Annual Report for Library Systems – 2024* has been reviewed and accepted and assures the Library System operated under its approved Plan of Service in accordance with the provisions of Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner, and be it finally

RESOLVED, the B&ECPL Board of Trustees assures the B&ECPL System will be operating under its approved Plan of Service in accordance with the provisions of Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner and assures the "Budget Summary" has been reviewed and accepted.

Trustee Panty made the motion to approve the proposed resolution. Trustee K. Johnson seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item J.2 – Walk-on Resolution 2025-12 – Erie County 2026 Capital Project Request Guidance. Deputy Director – COO, Angela Marinucci summarized proposed Resolution 2025-12 as presented below.

#### RESOLUTION 2025-12

WHEREAS, the time of year to prepare and submit capital project requests to Erie County for the following year period is approaching, and

WHEREAS, requests for County Capital funding focus on the County-owned Central Library building and on system-wide capital needs, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library hereby directs the Library Director to prepare, update costs as needed, and submit 2026 Erie County capital project requests prioritized as follows:

#### FOR THE 2026 FUNDING YEAR

- Central Building Various Improvements and Upgrades Project: \$4,000,000 in 2026
- Shipping and Maintenance Vehicle Replacements: \$160,000 in 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library expresses its support for requests submitted by the Erie County Department of Public Works to address Central Library basic building system needs including protecting the building envelope, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Library Director or designee(s) is authorized to transmit the requests to the appropriate County Department pursuant to the County's instructions and timetables and provide a report to the Library Board detailing the requests submitted.

Discussion ensued regarding various construction projects, and the funding needed for each individual project. Further discussion ensued the Library's shipping vehicles, and how the funds are transferred from Erie County to the Library. Trustee Panty made the motion to approve. Trustee K. Johnson seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Kelly with a second by Trustee Panty, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew  
Secretary