

PROPOSED  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
May 15, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, May 15, 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  
Michael Amodeo, Esq.  
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 4:02 p.m. A call of the roll was taken. A quorum was present.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Angela Marinucci proposed a walk-on resolution to be added under Agenda Item K – New Business. Trustee Sasiadek confirmed that the walk-on resolution will be number 2025-15. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Marinucci reconfirmed the addition. Trustee Amodeo motioned for approval of the change to the agenda. Trustee Panty seconded, and this change was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of Preceding Meetings.

Agenda Item C.1 – Minutes of the Meeting of April 17, 2025. Members reviewed and proposed corrections to several grammatical errors. It was agreed that these corrections will be made. Trustee Craik motioned to approve the Minutes as amended. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Trustee Moore arrived at 4:05 p.m.

Agenda Item C.2 – Minutes of the Special Meeting of May 5, 2025. Trustee Kelly suggested a correction to the title from “Special Meeting Report” to “Special Meeting Minutes.” It was agreed that this correction would be made. Trustee Bucki motioned to

approve the Minutes as amended. Trustee K. Johnson seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report thanking Board members for attending the special meeting of the Board on Monday, May 5. She then reminded the Board that they will be entering into Executive Session later to discuss a personnel matter. Next, Chair El-Behairy informed the Board that she spoke with the City of Buffalo Mayor’s office. Trustees K. Johnson, Moore, and Panty’s reappointments will be brought to the Common Council for approval, along with Trustee Craik’s transition to a City of Buffalo appointee. Once that is decided, the reappointments will be sent to the Erie County Legislature for final approval. However, Trustee Craik will not have to go through the Erie County Legislature again since he was recently reappointed. Trustee Craik’s move to the City of Buffalo will open a seat on the Board for an Erie County appointee.

Following that, Chair El-Behairy wanted to thank those that attended the *In Conversation* event on Friday, May 9. She stated that the event was beautifully done, and she wanted to give a special thank you to Assistant Deputy Director, Joy Testa Cinquino, and her staff, particularly Development Manager, Maureen Germaine.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Trustee Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below. Trustee Sasiadek pointed out that all resolutions moving forward will either be under Agenda Item – Unfinished Business or Agenda Item – New Business.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee  
May 8, 2025

Present: Executive Committee Chair Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek, and members Sharon Kelly and Elaine Panty. Also present were Deputy Director – Public Services Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Director – Buffalo Libraries Maria Lowe, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Emily Patronik, Assistant Deputy Director – Development & Communications Joy Testa Cinquino, Assistant Deputy Director – Human Resources Judy Fachko and Development & Communications Clerk Melissa Burgess.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:02 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, May 15. Chair El-Behairy noted that a Foundation Report agenda item should be added, as Foundation Chair Jack Connors planned to present.

Next, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci proposed that Agenda Item E.2.a – Res. 2025-13 – 2025 Budget Adjustments: Allocating 2024 Year-End Balance – be moved under New Business. She also noted the correct resolution number should be 2025-14.

Deputy Director – Public Services Darden noted that the minutes of the Special Meeting of May 5, 2025 should be added to the agenda. It was agreed that these be listed under Agenda Item C, along with the Minutes of the Meeting of April 17, 2025. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Patronik noted that the Monthly Financial Report would be listed as Agenda Item E.2.a.

Vice Chair Sasiadek asked if the Board will need to enter into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Chair El-Behairy noted that she is awaiting a response from the Library's attorney on this matter and whether it would require a bylaw change or procedural change. It was agreed that this would likely be handled under Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business.

Deputy Director – Public Services Darden noted that she would include a brief summary of the Library's marquee fundraiser, *In Conversation*, being held on Friday, May 9, in her report.

Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Patronik confirmed that the Budget & Finance Committee would be meeting in June. A reminder will be sent to all members.

Next, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Patronik discussed her items for the upcoming Board meeting. She noted that electricity and natural gas costs are going down slowly. One of the major encumbrances this year has been road salt. Road salt expenses were atypically high due to a local plant closure, requiring a costlier alternative. However, she noted that the Library does not typically buy road salt for the rest of the year.

Assistant Deputy Director – Controller Patronik noted that the Library's year-end balance includes savings of just over \$1 million. As part of Agenda Item K.1, the Library is recommending an allocation of \$275,000 toward several large expenses or high expenditure areas. This will allow the Library to be conservative and move the rest to the Unassigned Fund Balance for one-time expenditures, not recurring costs.

Deputy Director – Public Services Darden said that in her report, she will discuss the Library's rebranding efforts, as well as the Space Utilization Study now underway for the downtown Central Library. She will also provide updates on behalf of the 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition.

Discussion ensued regarding events at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library surrounding the upcoming anniversary of the 5/14 Buffalo shooting. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci noted that there is ongoing construction at the Merriweather Branch Library, including work on the roof, but that no construction will be performed on May 14 out of respect for the community.

Chair El-Behairy noted that Buffalo Urban League, an organization she is a part of, will be distributing 600 meals outside of the Merriweather Library between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. She also noted that the Urban League will be part of a separate event later that evening happening across from Tops Markets from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Discussion ensued.

Trustee Panty asked if there would be an executive session during the regular Board meeting. Discussion ensued, and it was agreed that Executive Session would be added under Agenda Item K – New Business.

Trustee Panty suggested that the Board should have an informal policy in place for offering support to trustees in times of need, such as following the loss of a family member. Discussion ensued. It was agreed that Vice Chair Sasiadek would reach out to the other trustees at this time and potentially collect donations to be used as the family sees fit. Going forward, this will occur on an ad hoc basis.

Finally, Assistant Deputy Director – Development & Communications Testa Cinquino reminded all in attendance about the ongoing Buffalo Public Schools art show, *Celebrate Art!*, being held in the Central Library's Collections Gallery. A celebratory reception was to begin shortly following the Executive Committee meeting, and all were welcome.

There being no further business, Trustee Kelly motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Panty seconded. The meeting ended at 4:28 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee. Assistant Deputy Director – Controller, Emily Patronik shared that she plans to schedule the next Budget and Finance Committee meeting for Thursday, June 12 immediately following the Executive Committee meeting. ADD – Controller, Patronik summarized the previous Budget and Finance Committee meeting as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Budget and Finance Committee Report  
April 17, 2025

Present: Members John D. Craik - Chair, Alan J. Bedenko, Carima El-Behairy, Kimberly Johnson, Joel Moore - Ex-Officio. Also present were Director, John Spears, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Angela Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Director – Controller, Emily Patronik, Assistant Deputy Director – Buffalo Libraries, Maria Lowe, Business Officer Manager, Tracy Palicki, and Assistant to the Director, Caitlin Goodrich.

The meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee began at 4:45 p.m. A quorum was present.

Discussion ensued regarding the budget, various Library construction projects, and financial trends for 2026.

With no further business, on a motion by Chair Craik, seconded by Trustee Bedenko, the Budget and Finance Committee adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. ADD – Controller, Patronik summarized the monthly financial report ending on March 31, 2025. Discussion ensued about the monthly financial report, and utilities. Next, ADD – Controller, Patronik updated the Board regarding the 2026 New York State Budget. She shared that Library Operating Aid received an approximately \$2.4 million dollar increase from last year. Following that, she went over New York State Construction Aid, Library Materials Aid, and NOVELny. Discussion ensued about other areas of the New York State Budget for 2026, including the grant for social workers, and the Love Your Library grant.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Deputy Director – Public Services, Dorinda Darden began her report by reading the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement for 2025. Copies of the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements were submitted by all system trustees and key employees and forwarded to Alan Bedenko, Chair of the Governance Committee per Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Conflict of Interest Policy Article III.

Following this, Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden informed the Board that representatives from Bostwick Design Partnership, and Library Consultant June Garcia visited the Central Library the week of April 23. Their purpose was to meet with Central Library departments and discuss the *Space Utilization Study*. They will be visiting again from June 11 through June 13 to hold visioning sessions with Central Library department stakeholders and plan to hold a public engagement soon.

Next, Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden provided an update on the Library's Development and Communications department launch of the Library's rebrand, *Profoundly Public*. She shared that the rebrand has been successful so far, and the administration has received positive feedback from the staff, and the public. She shared more information about the rebrand, the advertisements, billboards, and the successful *In Conversation* event on Friday, May 9.

She then reported that the County Executive's office will be holding a press conference at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on Thursday, May 29. The County Executive will be promoting Erie County as a designated *HEARTSafe* community in partnership with the American Heart Association, Red Cross, the Buffalo Bills, and the Library.

Next, she shared that Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library served as a space of peace, and reflection for the 3-year observance of the 5/14 massacre. There was also a

moment of silence during the Library's Managers/Directors meeting, and Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden listed the names of victims of that horrible tragedy, and the three survivors in honor. Following that, she shared that the Library is in the process of working on a 5/14 memorandum of understanding to confirm the Library's commitment to the *5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Coalition* project.

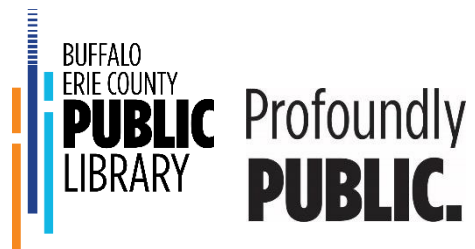
Following that, Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden shared other initiatives the Library is participating in to memorialize 5/14. These projects will attempt to help with the grieving, and healing process. Assistant Deputy Director – Buffalo Libraries, Maria Lowe, and Rare Book Curator, Heather Gring, are working with Ebony White from the Buffalo Center for Health and Equity, and local artist Brendan Bannon to advance these efforts.

Finally, Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden shared that she attended the monthly Public Library System Directors meeting held virtually, and New York State Librarian, Lauren Moore shared that although it is good news about the preliminary injunction against the executive order to eliminate IMLS, further advocacy is necessary.

Chair El-Beahry asked if Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Marinucci, and Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden are currently sharing certain Director duties. Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden stated that they are working on appropriate for their respective titles. Chair El-Beahry also commented on how the event at Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on Wednesday, May 14 was very moving.

The following report was submitted by Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden and transmitted to Board members prior to the meeting:

**B&ECPL Monthly Report**  
**April 2025**



**Profoundly Public - new bold branding.** The Development & Communications Department launched the new system-wide rebrand on Tuesday, April 29. *Profoundly Public* was the brainchild of Library Marketing Manager **Sean Piazza** and creative genius of Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton**. The brand reaffirms the library's commitment to intellectual freedom and public service. A media announcement emphasized our 200-year legacy of protecting intellectual freedom in Buffalo and Erie County, including open access and free expression, while championing the library's role as the people's free cultural institution. Key highlights stressed were: the

reimagining of the Central Library with the Space Utilization Study now underway and the announcement of over \$100,000 in grants to library branches, funded by donations, to improve patron-facing equipment & technology and enrich services.

The upcoming fundraiser *In Conversation*, planned by Development Manager **Maureen Germaine** with financial backing from the Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County and Larkin Development, takes place on Friday, May 9. It celebrates intellectual freedom and features award-winning journalist Margaret Sullivan and bestselling author Susan Orlean. By all accounts, the feedback on the new brand has been very positive. Several media interviews took place (WGRZ, Buffalo Rising, and WBFO), and additional interviews are scheduled in the coming weeks with WUFO and WIVB. A comprehensive advertising and marketing campaign with TV, social, billboards, and radio has also launched. The Library's online store also features new merchandise, which is already a hit with over 450 items sold! Special thanks to Assistant Library Display Artist **Helen Shandraw**, Development & Communications Clerk **Melissa Burgess** and Clerk Typist **Hazen Fertel**. This entire rebranding campaign is a reminder that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will not waver in our commitment to keeping information free, open, and accessible to all.

**5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition** – Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** and Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** were joined by other members of the 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition for an *Information Session* for prospective partners, held at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on April 3. **Susan** and **Heather** provided updates on the work being done by the *Oral History* and *Community Engagement Committees* as part of the coalition. Representatives from the Buffalo African American Museum, Canisius University, the University at Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, and the Burchfield Penney Art Center were present to learn about the work of the coalition.

Steering committee members of the **5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition** also held a retreat on April 14 to map out the strategic framework around the group's mission. The meeting was attended by Library Director **John Spears** and Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino**.

**Library on Wheels Bookmobile Rewrap** - Mobile Services Manager **Andrew Maines** and staff, in coordination with Marketing Manager **Sean Piazza** and Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton**, worked to have a rewrap of the *Library on Wheels* Bookmobile to align with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's new logo and rebranding efforts. The design created by **Dawn** was provided to FM Communications who completed the rewrap on April 17.



*Photo – The Bookmobile with the colorful new wrapping of the Library branding.*

**Library Speakers Consortium** – The Library now offers access to the *Library Speakers Consortium* as a system-wide *Online Author Talk* program. The consortium offers 2-3 *Bestselling Author Talk* events livestreamed every month. The events are also archived and can be accessed by all patrons. The program began on April 24 with *The Thrill of Writing Action, Adventure, and Suspense: A Conversation with Bestselling Author Gregg Hurwitz*.

**Week of the Young Child** – System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger** spoke on behalf of the Library for the *Week of the Young Child* celebration at the Audubon Branch in Amherst on April 7. Other speakers at the event included Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Deputy County Executive Lisa Chimera, Kimberly Suminski, Chief Executive Officer for Child Care Resource Network, and Megan Battista, Learning and Advocacy Coordinator for Lifford of Western New York. This year's national annual observance of the *Week of the Young Child* was from April 5-11. This is a time for communities to come together to celebrate young children, their families, and educators and place emphasis on the importance of early childhood education and the role families play in shaping a child's development.

**Central Library Space Utilization Study** - The Library hosted Bostwick Design Partnership members Rick Ortmeyer, Meagan Dutczak, and June Garcia, April 23 through April 25, for the first site visit for Central Library's Space Utilization Study. The consultants toured Central and talked to staff about public and staff spaces for each department, asking what aspects of those spaces they liked and disliked. Afterwards, the Bostwick Design Partnership members met with the Library Administration team and Supervisor of Building Operations & Maintenance **Mark Kross** to discuss the initial assessment where they expressed that "staff are dedicated and engaged and demonstrate a clear commitment to public service." The consultant team discussed how the reconfiguration of public and staff spaces could help improve the visitor entry experience, as well as make better use of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Gallery and "raw" space areas by decompressing overstressed areas and minimizing underutilized areas.

The Bostwick Design Partnership team will return in late spring or early summer for a second site visit which will include staff focus groups and meetings between key employees and additional consultants to discuss technology, engineering, and



architectural physical conditions. The consultant team will be working with staff and the public over the next few months, and the process is slated to conclude in fall of 2025.

## 1. Public Services

### Central Library:

On April 9, Adult Services Librarian **Kuniko Simon** hosted guest speaker Dr. Mustafa Gökçek from Niagara University's Department of History for the first Arab American Heritage Month event, "*Is Islam an Arab Religion? Cultural and Religious Distinctions in the Middle East.*" From the start, he introduced the thirteen participants to diverse, complex layers of culture, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and race among Muslims, even though Islam is based on the Quran and the Prophet's writings, which were written in Arabic, for Arab audiences. He also introduced the audience to the core beliefs of Islam and cited the Quran. During the open discussion, the public engaged in conversations with Dr. Gökçek and shared cultural exchanges with Turkish coffee and desserts from Buffalo United Peace.



*Photos – A flyer for the event at the Central Library with Dr. Mustafa Gökçek; Dr. Mustafa Gökçek speaking to a crowd at the Central Library's Ring of Knowledge.*

Adult Services Librarian **Ros Damico** held a screening on Thursday, April 10, showcasing *Free For All: The Public Library* in partnership with BTPM (Buffalo Toronto Public Media) representative Kathryn Larsen. **Ros** attended a planning session at the WNED studios to arrange for public radio and television advertising and tabling by BTPM. She also listed the program in *Kids Out and About* and the NYLA website National Library Week and handed out flyers to area businesses and residents in The Hotel Lafayette and Public Espresso. The program began with a Library Week Proclamation by Ms. Larsen, and a sharing of library memories after the inspirational film was shown. Librarian **Pamela Edholm**, Librarian Trainee **Faith Miller**, and

Library Associate **Tami Linkowski** collaborated for a pre-film program on the topic of library advocacy, with button-making, library card signups & treats, including cotton candy from a machine loaned by the Youth Services Department.

Launch Pad Manager **Jordan Smith** participated in the Youth Power Job Fair on April 7, which was coordinated by Precious Lugo of Families Together in New York State, to provide professional headshots to job seekers in need.

Children's Department Manager **Dan Lewandowski**, in partnership with Arts for Learning WNY, presented Young Audiences Week in the Children's Room April 14 to April 17. Every day, a different resident artist did a craft in the Children's Room: Monday was glass magnets, Tuesday was Zentangles, Wednesday was button making, and Thursday featured rubber band carvings. This week provided a nice opportunity for parents to do something with their children since it corresponded with Buffalo Public Schools' Spring break.

Children's Librarian **Jennifer Lelinski** was interviewed by Buffalo Toronto Public Media on April 29 to discuss picture books about problem solving. The interview culminated in a short video about their show *Lyla in the Loop* and books to help kids learn about problem-solving and asking questions. The video was posted on May 1 to the Buffalo Toronto Public Media PBS social media platforms and was shared by the library.

**Dan Lewandowski**, with help from Teen Services Manager **Taylor Harding**, hosted a class visit from Our Lady of Victory Elementary School on April 22. Students from 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade visited, with special attention given to local history and how to use the library for research. In addition to a tour, instruction was given on using microfilm from the Grosvenor Room along with searching Google and the library's catalog. Participants also browsed local history materials about Lackawanna and Our Lady of Victory National Shrine and Basilica, with guidance from **Susan Buttaccio** and **Special Collections Librarian Elizabeth (Libby) Stengel**.

On April 12, Central's Teen Advisory Group, under the guidance of Library Assistant **Sarah Barry**, took over the Children's Room for an egg hunt complete with games, face painting, and crafts with the help of Librarians **Erin Burke** and **Jennifer Lelinski**. Over 50 attendees found eggs and went home with treats from the event.

**Sarah Barry** and **Taylor Harding** hosted Bingo for the first time in the Teen Space on April 16. **Sarah** and **Taylor** used a traditional Bingo kit and gave away king-sized candy bars as prizes. It was a big hit and staff anticipate hosting it again in the future.

The **Graphics Department** hung the new dictionary exhibit in the Rare Book Room and worked with Buffalo Public Schools on their student artwork exhibit at Central.

On April 23, **Dan Lewandowski** hosted a visit of three classes from Bennett Park. The theme for the visit was kites and stories were read about flying kites. A crowd favorite was *Stuck* by Oliver Jeffers, which helps teach kids problem-solving skills by reading

about a boy who gets his kite stuck in a tree. Afterwards, a math-themed craft was done that involved cutting out triangles and using them to form the body of a kite, which were decorated with crayons and string.

### Buffalo Branches:

### Dudley Programming Highlights:

The Dudley Branch ran a Padawan Challenge to give away free *Star Wars* books. Manager **Zoe Grimes** designed a series of Jedi-themed and Sith-themed activities that kids could do in order to receive raffle tickets for a chance to win one of four copies of *The Moving Target: A Princess Leia Adventure*. This giveaway was in connection to May 4 (Star Wars pun: May the Fourth be with you). The challenge was designed to visually mimic the upcoming Summer Reading Badging Challenge, in the hope of getting kids used to the format, and excited to continue reading challenges for the summer.



A highlight of the program was two kids who mentioned they were into *Star Wars* during Teen Gaming Night, near the end of the challenge time period. **Zoe** told them they still had time to complete some of the challenge and they went above and beyond. They managed to do all of the challenges, in fact, in the library! They dug up some (short) *Star Wars* books to read, made their angry and calm lists, and went to the adjoining park to do their running. The best moment, though, was the Chores task. They asked Library Assistant **Ana Sennett**, if there was anything they could do in the library, and she allowed them to hang up posters to complete their “chores.”

Dudley's proudest success this month was the tag-team efforts of **Ana Sennett** and **Zoe Grimes** in contacting and picking up donations from the South Buffalo Food Pantry. Due to the library staff's initiative and the generous donation, Dudley Branch Library was able to restock its Community Pantry with food and other necessities for patrons in need.



*Photos – The Dudley Branch Library’s Community Pantry filled with canned vegetables, fish/meat, and soup, as well as essentials.*

The Dudley Branch hosted a free “books for kids week” from April 8 to April 14, where any kid 17 or under could pick a free book from the library’s book sale. In addition to helping kids start or add to their home libraries, a secondary benefit of this program was cleaning out older items to make space for new items. It also was a great way to gauge youth interest in titles. Graphic novels were chosen most frequently.

Dudley’s Take-and-Makes this month were particularly special and generated a lot of excitement among the patrons. The first Take-and-Make given out on April 12, an Easter-themed clothespin craft, had all thirty kits claimed. The second Take-and-Make ready for distribution on April 26, a DIY toilet paper tube birdfeeder, were gone within four days.

Dudley’s Cinema Saturday welcomed a new participant for a screening of *Moana 2* on April 12. **Ana Sennett** will add an additional ‘retro’ themed movie day in May, with the goal of connecting with a wider range of patrons.

**Zoe Grimes** hosted Family Story Time on April 14. Due to low attendance over time, Dudley Branch Library will transition to a Chapter Book Story Time next month, which will be offered through the summer. This will allow time to assess if this type of story time can better connect with the community and complement, instead of compete with, existing offerings in the area.

Dudley’s Detectives, the mystery/thriller themed book club run by **Ana Sennett**, had five aspiring sleuths attend on April 29. The participants read *Local Woman Missing* by Mary Kubica. Everyone had a great time chatting about the characters, debating who



they thought committed the crime, who threw everyone off, and why. The group offers an opportunity to connect with like-minded people as well as the chance to play detective! Next month the group looks forward to reading and discussing *The Seven Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle* by Stuart Turton.

Teen Gaming relaunched this month at the Dudley Branch Library, with a new advertising style. It gained attention, with one teen asking his mother to pass on his compliments. Teen Gaming was well-attended, which staff attributed to lowering the age to 10+, allowing tweens to participate.

**Ana Sennett, Zoe Grimes** and Senior Page **Eliana Dermody** hosted technology one-on-ones with patrons, helping them learn how to use email and search the Internet. In addition, one patron was taught how create an account for Indeed as well as how to navigate the job search website, increasing her ability to find work.

**Zoe Grimes** held 4 LEGO Club sessions on Thursdays April 3, 10, 17, and 24. The program drew a small, but enthusiastic audience.

On April 8, **Ana Sennett** ran the Adult Crafting hour which featured yarn art. Ana is excited to debut faux stained glass vases for May's Adult Crafting Hour.

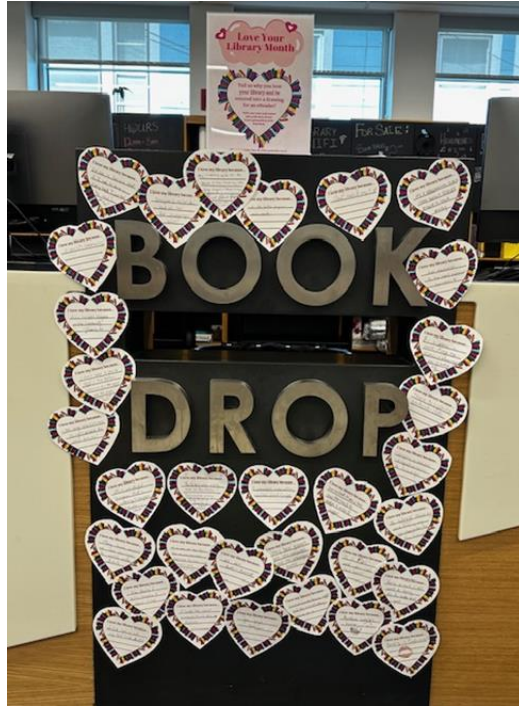
#### **Crane Programming Highlights:**

Throughout the month of April, the Crane Branch Library orchestrated a Scavenger Hunt in which young patrons found nine images hidden throughout the children's section and then picked a prize. The theme for April was birds, in honor of birds migrating in the spring. Crane had 166 patrons participate this month.

The Crane Branch distributed 187 take-and-makes in April, including various "Build Your Own" crafts, which are images printed on cardstock that young patrons can cut out, color, and glue together, such as Build Your Own Owl (themed for the Hawk Creek program) or Build Your Own Bee. The library also distributed "color your own" Easter crowns, egg, and bunny crafts.

The Crane Branch provides rotating jigsaw puzzles on a patron table for adults to sit and work on at their leisure. April saw six patrons puzzling.

The Crane Branch hosted a giveaway for the month of April, asking patrons what they loved about their library. A random winner from the 32 patrons who participated will be selected on May 1. That winner will receive a Kobo eReader.



*Photo – Crane Branch Library staff decorated their book drop with paper hearts. These paper hearts have written comments by patrons sharing what they love about their library.*

Throughout the Month, Crane Branch offered Open Chess for adults on Tuesday nights, during which the library supplies the chess boards so patrons can gather and play. Twenty-four patrons attended open chess in April.

The library also hosted a Thursday afternoon LEGO Club with seven patrons attending in April. LEGOS are put out on a table in the children's area for kids and their parents to build together. Baseplates are provided so all creations can be displayed on the library's holds shelf for the week.

Senior Page **Thomas Wagner** moderated a Nintendo Switch gaming program on Thursday afternoons tailored for kids under 12. The program is limited to four participants per week, so registration is required. Participants have the choice of playing four different games (*Mario Kart*, *Mario Party Superstars*, *Overcooked*, or *Sports*). Nine patrons attended in April, including some new faces. One participant attends because his own Switch is broken and his parents can't afford a new one – so he plays with new friends at the library!

Library Assistant **Kristen Wall** hosted Baby and Toddler Story Time April 4 and 11 until Librarian Trainee **Max Brousseau** returned to resume hosting on April 25. A total of 50 patrons attended in April. **Max's** story times are so popular that, continuing in May, she will hold two sessions on Friday mornings in an effort to have two smaller crowds, instead of one larger one.

Hawk Creek Wildlife Center was invited to the Crane Branch to present a program on owls on April 5. The program brought in a staggering 85 patrons. Themed take-and-make crafts were offered, and owl-themed books were available for borrowing.

The Crane Branch hosted a Chess Club for children 12 and under, taught by James Derby, every Saturday morning in April. The young patrons take turns playing against one another as well as against Mr. Derby.

The Crane Branch hosted Erie County's Chief Environmental Compliance Specialist, Mary MacSwan, for a "how-to" composting workshop on April 7. Eight patrons attended the workshop, and a rain barrel was raffled off for one lucky winner.

In addition, the Crane Branch hosts a local Old Time Jam every second Saturday of the month. In April, 25 musicians attended the session, playing a mix of string instruments together for two hours in the event space.

Senior Page **Melissa Arneth** hosted a drop-in button making program on April 16, in which patrons made a button with the themes of Easter and spring. **Melissa** sets up a table in the main area of the library to entice patrons to make buttons, even if that isn't their original reason for visiting the library. Many patrons return each month specifically to make new buttons.

On April 16, Crane Branch hosted a matinee movie for children on spring break from school—showing *The Lorax* in honor of Earth Day on April 22. During the movie, kids snacked on library-provided popcorn and cookies, and colored Lorax coloring pages.

The Crane Branch hosted Buffalo Drag Story Time on April 19. Twenty-five patrons attended the program, which was Earth Day themed. They read the book *Plant the Rainbow* by Lois Elhert and sang songs including "Mr. Golden Sun."

On April 22, Crane Branch began a collaboration with the owner of the store Lumpy Buttons to establish a monthly community craft night, where patrons are welcome to come and work on any craft of their choosing, such as knitting or sewing.

Library Clerk **Arden Mohr** hosted a trivia night for adults on April 28, with the theme of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Patrons were divided into teams and those on the winning team each received themed iron-on patches and buttons as their prizes. Attendees are encouraged to dress on theme to be awarded extra points.

**Kristen Wall** and Senior Page **Quinn Dipzinski** hosted their monthly board game night on April 29. The club played a game previously suggested by a patron called Vivarium. Vivarium is a card collection game based on the story of a human-free continent being discovered, teeming with new plants and animals. The program also attracted the attention of patrons who want to begin playing Dungeons and Dragons.

Finally, Crane Branch hosted Buffalo-born author Maura Casey, who was promoting her new book, *Saving Ellen* on April 29. The event was also promoted by Talking Leaves Books. Forty-five patrons attended the author talk.

**System Services:**

**Buffalo Stories: The Buffalo History Channel - Heather Gring** hosted the next installment of the *Buffalo Stories* screening series on April 12 at the Central Library. Attendees viewed the showcase of short films from the Buffalo History Channel's collection of videos about African American history in Buffalo.

**Career and Job Fairs** – System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** coordinated the Families Together in New York State Youth Power *Job Fair* on April 7 at the Central Library. There were 10 community agencies and businesses on hand to share their job openings with those in attendance. **Jacob** also worked in partnership with the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities and ACCESS-VR to host the *Diversity Fair* at the Central Library on April 10. Representatives from over 50 businesses and organizations were on hand to share their resources with the 250 people in attendance.

**Clothing Giveaways - Jacob Rachwal** worked with Sasiya Davis-Johnson from Amazing Women Ministry Inc. to offer free clothing giveaway events at the Central Library on April 9, 22, and 29. Gently used clothing was available for all of those in need. **Jacob** also worked with representatives of UB HEALS to offer a *Shop For Free* event at the Central Library on April 26. Many people in attendance were able to shop for clothing, shoes, and accessories. Everything was provided free of charge for those who stopped by.

**Genealogy Training** – Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** held a virtual meeting with the Choose Your Genealogy Adventure group on April 17. Attendees discussed genealogy resources and tips.

**It Takes a Village Action Organization Graduation Ceremony – Andrew Maines** continues to work with Dr. Beverly Newkirk, Executive Director of It Takes a Village (ITAV) Action Organization. The organization works to find employment for formerly incarcerated individuals and other at-risk populations in Buffalo. **Andrew** participated in ITAV's *Graduation Ceremony* held at the Central Library on April 24. Eleven graduates received certificates of recognition from local, county, and state elected officials. Phenomenal Ladies of Rhythm provided a musical performance. After the ceremony, 78 attendees, including family and friends of the graduates, celebrated with a potluck dinner.

**Reading Club – Libby Stengel** hosted the monthly meeting of the *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club* on April 24.

**University at Buffalo (UB) Humanities Series** – Dr. Paola Ugolini, Associate Professor at the University at Buffalo's (UB) Department of Romance Languages and Literatures



presented a lecture on: *Was the Renaissance Too Cool For You? The Book of the Courtier, or, a Guide for the Hip & Ambitious* on April 11 at the Central Library. **Heather Gring** curated a selection of books for those in attendance at the event, which included early 16<sup>th</sup> century editions of Castiglione's famous advice book.

#### **Displays and Exhibits:**

**Isaiah Cornfield**, a volunteer in the Special Collections Department, curated an exhibit for *Arab American Heritage Month* featuring materials from the Rare Book Room as well as material from the closed stacks to highlight the history and art of Arab Americans.

In collaboration with the Buffalo Presidential Center, Rare Book and Map Librarian **Charles Alaimo** put together a display about Abraham Lincoln in honor of the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's funerary cortege stopping in Buffalo on April 27, 1865. Photographs in the Rare Book collection document the stop.

**Heather Gring** and Rare Book Clerk **Andrew Semo** installed the new Rare Book Room exhibit, *What Does it All Mean? Exploring the Dictionary*. The exhibit, which will run through the summer, features a brief history of English dictionaries and features the Rare Book Room copies of the 1755 Samuel Johnson Dictionary and first edition Webster's American Dictionary. About sixteen people attended the opening on April 17, including co-curator Dr. Lisa Berglund, a Buffalo State professor and dictionary specialist. This exhibition was curated in conjunction with the *25th Biennial Dictionary Society of North America Conference*, which will be held at Buffalo State University May 29 to May 31.

**Charles Alaimo** created a new display in the Mark Twain Room highlighting materials related to Huckleberry Finn productions on stage and screen. Included in the exhibit are press kits, lobby cards, screenplays, and other memorabilia for stage and film versions of Twain's novel from 1931 to 1993.

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

System Adult Outreach Service Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** presented on Small Business resources in the TechKnow Lab on April 4 to a group from The Women's Business Center at Canisius University. Beforehand, Central Adult Services Librarian **Leslie Carr** provided the group with a tour of the Central Library.

**Susan Buttaccio** provided a tour of the Grosvenor Room and Rare Book Room collections to Erie County Historical Commissioner Melissa Leonard with guidance and insight from **Heather Gring** on April 8.

**Susan Buttaccio**, **Heather Gring** and other Special Collections staff hosted twelve members of the Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History, a part of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, for a tour of the Grosvenor Room and materials on April 24. The team was visiting Buffalo in preparation of a 2026 digitization initiative focusing on Buffalo's

African American history, and they were impressed with the scope and depth of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's Special Collections.

**Heather Gring** provided a local bibliophile blogger a tour through the Rare Book collection and **Heather** and **Libby Stengel** conducted the monthly *Special Collections* Tour on April 26.

**Libby** hosted a group of students from SUNY Buffalo State University's Garman Art Conservation Department on April 29. Students toured both public and private areas in the Grosvenor Room. They will prepare reports outlining how the Special Collections Department can improve preservation conditions in the library.

#### **Outreach:**

Mobile Service Librarian **Jennifer Block** and Mobile Services Librarian Trainee **Olivia Adams** provided tabling at the *Saturday Academy* at Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) #206 South Park High School and BPS #97 Harvey Austin School on April 5 and April 26 respectively. **Jennifer** and **Olivia** met with many families, promoted library programs and services, and issued library cards.

**Chelsey Lonberger** and **Andrew Maines** provided tabling at the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's Kids concert with the theme *Carnival of the Animals* on April 6. They promoted Summer Reading programs and offered coloring bookmarks that have a QR link to library programs, and distributed animal masks to go along with the theme. There were 600 attendees, including 300 children, who visited the library table.

**Carol Kowalik-Happy** tabled at the Vendor & Craft Show at St. Leo the Great Church in Amherst on April 12. Giovanna Ferraina, who organizes many craft fairs, purchased the table for the library. She is also involved in the creative small business community and wanted the library to see how craft fairs were organized and run. Seventy people stopped by the library table.

**Max Brousseau** and System Youth Outreach Services Library Assistant **Emily McDonald** visited the Buffalo Museum of Science on April 16 for their *Spring into Space* week. They promoted NASA kits that can be checked out at the library, and provided a multicultural constellation craft. **Max** and **Emily** interacted with over 200 members of the community.

On April 17, **Kuniko Simon** participated in the Asian American Foundation-sponsored roundtable discussion: *Understanding the needs of Asian New Yorkers in the current landscape* at the International Institute of Buffalo. Local non-profit immigrant service organizations shared their views of their clients' mental health and language access needs, the changing economic climate and its impacts on their current services, and gaps in their abilities to provide services.

**Jacob Rachwal** tabled at the Buffalo Urban League's *Job Fair* held at the Delavan-Grider Community Center in Buffalo on April 23. **Jacob** shared library job postings

and collected applications from those in attendance. He also shared information on resources on resume writing, databases for job hunting and business, and technology training.

**Susan Buttaccio** presented *Getting the Most Out of Ancestry Library* to 94 members of the Daughters of the American Revolution at their annual circuit meeting held at the Poplar Hills Estate in East Aurora on April 26.

**Carol Kowalik-Happy** presented on small business resources available through the library at SCORE Buffalo Niagara's *Starting and Managing Your Own Business* daylong workshop on April 26. There were 42 people in attendance. **Carol** was also able to issue nine new library cards.

**Jacob Rachwal** attended a *Job Fair* sponsored by the New York State Department of Labor at Erie 1 BOCES in West Seneca on April 30. **Jacob** shared library resources on job hunting, resume writing, and the *Book a Librarian* service with about 200 attendees at the event. Many also showed interest in career opportunities at the library.

## 2. Collection Development

### Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,652	9,889	270	1,066	509,823
Young Adult Print	375	1,406	58	299	69,381
Adult Print	3,808	13,493	641	2,613	1,763,958
Media	2,143	9,154	291	1,479	515,484
Other*	2,006	7,155	34	68	173,268
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>10,984</b>	<b>41,097</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>5,525</b>	<b>3,031,914</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

### Electronic Collections\*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,729	17,406	1,290	5,865	124,934
eAudiobooks	7,062	30,979	358	1,549	62,004
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,860
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11,791</b>	<b>48,385</b>	<b>1,648</b>	<b>7,414</b>	<b>192,798</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>22,775</b>	<b>89,482</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>12,939</b>	<b>3,224,712</b>

**Digital Collections** - Institutional Services Library Assistant **Anthony Skubis** began working with Launch Pad Makerspace staff to scan and digitize dozens of photograph slides documenting the construction of the Erie County Correctional Facility in the 1980s. The project will ensure that copies of the slides are preserved and accessible.

New additions to the Rich Newberg Reports collection have begun to be added to the Digital Collections by Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin**. These include *Agent Orange*, *Breakout*, *Daredevil David Munday Conquers Niagara*, and others.

The *Digital Scriptorium* project now has all of the Rare Book Room's digital files to add to the collection portal. The *Digital Scriptorium* highlights medieval manuscripts in collections throughout the United States and beyond.

**Rare Books and Special Collections** – **Rhonda Hoffman** assisted with packing and planning for the transfer of a large donation of genealogy materials to the Western New York Genealogical Society collection.

**Libby Stengel** accepted a donation of yearbooks from Niagara University, University at Buffalo, Buffalo General Hospital, Baker-Victory High School, and Bishop Neumann High School.

**Libby** worked with Tanya Penska, Curator of Hawk Creek Wildlife Center in East Aurora, to coordinate a donation of *The Talon*, Hawk Creek's annual report. Seventy-three volumes were transferred to Rare Books, largely early issues of the Gentleman's Magazine serial, dating back to the 1700s.

### 3. Fundraising

#### Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – April 30, 2025	\$220,593

#### Highlights:

The Library's Online Store now offers a print-on-demand format that was initially tested by introducing a Buffalo Bills-related t-shirt. The shirt quickly gained popularity, and any necessary adjustments to the process were made in time for the bigger launch of the new brand and updated designs. There has been a jump in sales during the month of April with:

- 335 orders
- 452 items sold
- \$9,489.80 in gross sales, including \$4,217.80 in profit.

Development & Communications worked closely with the Library Foundation to plan and execute the *In Conversation* fundraiser. The event will welcome over 108 community members. Funds raised will support the libraries.

All development correspondences and platforms (i.e. donor pages) are currently being updated with the new library brand and logo. It is anticipated to take between a few months to a year before all components are updated.

Mass email sent in April:

- White House slashes the Institute of Museum and Library Services – sent to all active donors (over 2,000), 66% open rate, garnered \$1,045 in donations.
- White House slashes the Institute of Museum and Library Services – sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 90,000), 45% open rate, garnered \$1,972 in donations.
- Join Us for a One Night Only Event: *In Conversation* – sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 90,000), 36% open rate, garnered \$1,575 in ticket sales.

#### 4. Funding/Facilities

##### Funding:

**New York State Budget Running Late** – As of April 30, 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 are 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 Library Operating Aid by \$2.5 million and decreased Construction Aid \$10 million dollars from the 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 included an increase to \$11.50 per pupil. As of April 7, we were 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.

#### **Facilities:**

On April 23, Library Finance and Facility staff submitted the 2026 B&ECPL Capital Request to Erie County DPW. Requests this year totaled \$4 million. Funding will be used for the replacement of the Central Library chillers, the replacement of the Central Library roof and vegetative installation, and the replacement of the Rare Book Room HVAC system.

On April 23, Bostwick Design Partnership commenced the Space Utilization Study with the facility evaluation of the Central Library and meetings with multiple Library departments to gauge staff questions and concerns. A follow up site visit/meeting will be scheduled in the future.

On April 24, Library facility staff met with 6 Star Roofing and LaBella Associates to kick off the construction scheduled for the East Clinton Branch Library. Work schedules were developed, and City regulations were reviewed. Construction will begin in May, with substantial completion scheduled for early September.

### **5. Staff Development**

**Staff Members Attend ALA Online Learning Event Aimed at Enhancing Collaboration with Teens** - On April 2, the Library funded three staff members from Central Teen Services to attend the ALA eLearning session, "Collaborating with Teens to Plan Your YA Events." This included **Sarah Barry, Taylor Harding, and Kelly Woods**. The class aimed to provide participants with strategies to increase teen engagement in library services, techniques to get buy-in from administration for collaborative teen programs, and marketing ideas to effectively reach teen audiences. The goal of the attendees was to actionably apply their learning to active plans and programs happening in the Central Library Teen Space.

**Library Sponsors Staff Members to Attend NYLA YSS Annual Conference** - On April 4, three employees attended the New York Library Association's (NYLA) Youth Services Section (YSS) Annual Conference held in Mount Kisco, New York. The theme of the conference was "All on the Same Page" and touted a full day of learning, inspiration, and connections amongst youth services colleagues from across the state. In attendance from B&ECPL were **Heather Bermingham, Max Brousseau, and Jennifer Lelinski**. Jennifer is the planning committee chair, and **Max** and **Heather** are on the committee, for the 2026 NYLA YSS Annual Conference that is slated to take place in the Western New York area. The team gained valuable insights into the organization of the event to help them start their own preparations for next year.

**Human Resources Kicks Off 2-Part Internal Training Series for Supervisors** - On April 22, the Human Resources Department hosted a session called "Fostering Accountability and Improvement - Turning Challenges into Growth Opportunities"

that was open to all supervisors from across all library locations. Objectives of this learning opportunity included developing skills to lead with accountability, with a focus on how to turn staff challenges into growth opportunities, set clear expectations, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. The class was facilitated by Assistant Deputy Director – Human Resources **Judy Fachko**. There were nine supervisors in attendance at this hybrid event, held concurrently in person at Central Library and virtually via Zoom. The second session in the series called “Transformative Performance Reviews - Empowering Success through Meaningful Evaluations” is scheduled for May 6, and will again be offered in the same hybrid format.

**Webinars** - Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other virtual learning programs in April, including: *Day of Dialog Annual Event* (from Library Journal), *Mastering the Art of Difficult Conversations* (from the Rochester Regional Library Council), *The First Amendment and Libraries* (from Niche Academy), and *Urban Librarians Unite: Urban Library Trauma Study* (from New York State Library).

## 6. Communications

### Media:

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date/Publish Date
Earned Media	<b>Dan Lewandowski</b> joined the radio/podcast On Target hosted by Amherst Public Library Trustee Penny Wolfgang.	<a href="#">WGR 550</a> (4/4)
Earned Media	<b>Susan Buttaccio</b> spoke with Spectrum News on the history of tariffs.	<a href="#">Spectrum</a> (4/14)
Earned Media	Congressman Tim Kennedy spoke out against an executive order that would cut funding to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Deputy Director of Public Services <b>Dorinda Darden</b> , was on-hand at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library and provided comments on what libraries bring to our communities.	<a href="#">WGRZ Channel 2</a> (4/24) <a href="#">BTPM</a> (4/24) <a href="#">Spectrum</a> (4/24) <a href="#">WIVB Channel 4</a> (4/24)
Earned Media	Buffalo & Erie County Public Library COO	<a href="#">WIVB Channel 4</a> (4/14)

	<b>Angela Marinucci</b> spoke on IMLS cuts.	
Press Release	Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Unveils Bold Rebrand; Reaffirms Commitment to Intellectual Freedom and Public Service.  With release of <a href="#">Library Commercial</a> .	<a href="#">Press Release – Link</a> (4/29)
Earned Media	<b>Angela Marinucci</b> speaks about the library’s rebrand, with emphasis on the space utilization effort and improvement of the Central Library.	<a href="#">BTPM</a> (4/29)

**Dan Lewandowski** was an invited guest on Judge Penny Wolfgang’s radio show for National Library Month. He spoke about the importance of reading to children. The interview was syndicated on major radio stations including 98.5 FM and 107.7 FM.

**Jennifer Lelinski** met with social media managers from Buffalo Toronto Public Media PBS Kids on April 29 to promote books about problem solving featuring their show *Lyla in the Loop*.

#### Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	115	412	7,543	16,049	329	14,775
Flickr	-	-	1,960	10,312	-	59
Google Ads <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	2,698	11,373	N/A	N/A
Instagram	18	74	14,548	38,226	215	7,749
Pinterest	35	125	36	229	-1	2,046
Twitter (X)	71	190	1,059	1,472	-11	10,506
Bluesky	30	84	257	555	51	1,135
YouTube	8	26	968	8,551	12	792
TikTok	-	1	704	2,836	4	1,030
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>29,773</b>	<b>89,603</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>38,092</b>

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



## 7. Partnerships

**Buffalo Center for Health Equity - Jacob Rachwal** worked with Ebony White from the Buffalo Center for Health Equity to have a blood pressure unit installed at the Central Library as part of their *Blood Pressure Initiative*. The unit will be in place for at least a year. It allows patrons to test their blood pressure and pulse for free, and provides a printout of this information. Literature and facts about blood pressure were also included.

**Buffalo Public Schools - Susan Buttaccio** met with Rich Pyczsek, Buffalo Public Schools Coordinator of Social Studies, to discuss an upcoming Teacher Continuing Education session that will be coming to the Central Library in May.

**Western New York Library Resources Council - Adam Rubin**, as co-chair of the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Preservation Committee, assisted in organizing the *Networking & Listening Breakfast for Special Collections* at the WNYLRC Training Center in Amherst on April 25. Representatives of many local libraries, archives, and museums attended for a conversation and discussion regarding the needs of special collections in the area. **Heather Gring** was the featured speaker and provided a brief address on her history as a solo archivist and resources available to small organizations.

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

- Children's Centers in the Courts
- Erie County Historical Commission
- Live Well Erie Working Groups
- Outreach Coordinators in New York's Public Library Systems
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

## 8. Planning for the Future

Deputy Director **Dorinda Darden**, **Susan Buttaccio**, and **Heather Gring** participated in a *Community Conversation* presented by the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture's Smith Center for the Digitization and Curation of African American History, held at the Northland Workforce Training Center on April 25. Members from the Smith Center team will be visiting Buffalo for the next year, culminating in a two-month long project in May-June 2026 with the Buffalo community to preserve and share local materials.

**Heather Gring** is coordinating with Buffalo's first Poet Laureate Jillian Hanesworth to host a free reading of Hanesworth's poetry on May 29 in the Auditorium at the Central Library. Jillian's work is now represented in the Rare Book Collection. **Heather** is also working with Robin Jordan, a local artist, writer, and zinester, on collaborative programming about making zines. Robin is utilizing content from Special Collections

in her zine workshops, and is working with **Heather** to develop more in-depth history-focused zine programming for the future.

**Heather Bermingham** started finalizing plans for 5-7 students from Buffalo State University's Art Education program to provide art classes and drop-in art programming at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library this summer as part of the *Color Your World* theme. Heather also met with Jessica Miller, director of Anything Arts, and had preliminary discussions about Jessica providing free art programs to Library patrons both in the summer and beyond. This connection came about because Jessica's youngest child attends the daycare where **Heather** does weekly outreach. Due to construction taking place during summer reading, these partnerships will be postponed, but Heather will reconnect with both groups in the fall.

## Appendices

### A. Monthly Statistics

#### System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	1119	4653	4184	14524
Children 5 and under	1795	5576	5497	21281
Children 6-11	4149	11740	5918	19798
Intergenerational/Combined	6357	22636	14332	44016
Teens	331	1203	501	2102
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>13751</b>	<b>45808</b>	<b>30432</b>	<b>101721</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>13751</b>	<b>45808</b>	<b>30432</b>	<b>101721</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	22	73	127	825
Children 5 and under	2	5	90	129
Children 6-11	0	3	0	149
Intergenerational/Combined	5	20	36	195
Teens	1	23	0	50
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>1348</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	4	15	71	1392
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	9	817	1938
Intergenerational/Combined	10	34	1366	4556
Teens	0	0	0	0
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2254</b>	<b>7886</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>2507</b>	<b>9234</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13797</b>	<b>45990</b>	<b>32939</b>	<b>110955</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>.

## **B. Contracting Library Activity Reports**

**Town of Collins Public Library** – submitted by Abigail Barten-McGowan, Director

Highlights of events and activities at the Collins Library:

**Egg Hunt** – On April 12, we held two sessions of our Annual Egg Hunt. With over 100 people and 1,000 eggs, this is one of our busiest programs of the year. The hard work of our staff, particularly Library Clerk **Ashley Moyer's** organization and set up, is what makes it all possible.

**Crafter-noons** – Our newest monthly program, Crafter-noons, the first Saturday of each month, has been gaining popularity. Adults show up with their own crafts and watch a cozy movie. These are being spearheaded by Page **Sian Eisenhut**.

**Adult Crafts** – The second Saturday of the month, the library hosts a craft class for adults, a popular program that usually has a waiting list. In April we crafted a topsy-turvy planter that was a lot of fun to build, and May will feature a decoupage trinket dish. Each month our awesome patrons get to stretch their creativity!

**Movie Week** – The week of April 14-19, during our local school's spring break, the library hosted a movie every day at 1 p.m. in addition to our regular evening programs, giving families a great excuse to get out of the house and avoid boredom! Attendees colored and enjoyed popcorn along with new releases and seasonal movies.

**Girl Scouts** – On April 25, the library hosted a Girl Scout troop to explore the library and everything offered, including stories, crafts, and what makes our library special.

**Crochet Friends** – Kids can now bring home a friend! Select *amigurumi* (crochet stuffies) based on popular books from our children's collection may be checked out along with a book! These were all crafted by Library Clerk **Jennifer O'Mara**, and have been part of ongoing displays. **Jennifer** also runs the twice-monthly crochet groups with a new featured pattern each month.

**Outreach** – On May 3, Library Director **Abbie Barten-McGowan** did outreach at the Collins Regional Historical Society's annual Craft Show. She had crafts for the kids and spoke about upcoming events, like the concert series and summer reading. The

Historical Society is one of the library's biggest supporters and partners in the community.

**Compact Civics and Rural Libraries** – On April 17, a crew from Buffalo Toronto Public Media came down to film an upcoming episode of Compact Civics about the important role of rural libraries in the community. Host Cory McCant and the crew filmed around the library, including three programs, had some fun with the Library of Things, and did an interview with Library Director **Abbie Barten-McGowan**. It is expected to release on May 16 on air via BTPM, online by the app, and on Buffalo Toronto Public Media's YouTube. We can't wait to share our awesome library with everyone!

**Star Wars Story Time** – We never miss a reason to celebrate *Star Wars*, and instead of just May the 4<sup>th</sup>, we go for “This is the May” and show our love of *Star Wars* all month. The library will feature books and DVDs, our monthly scavenger hunt is all about Ahsoka, and we will have a special *Star Wars* story time on May 15!

**New Library of Things Items** – After patron and staff suggestions and a round of patron voting, the Collins Library is excited to be adding new items to our Library of Things collection! Top-voted items include a telescope, kids’ microscope, and walkie-talkies. These and more will soon be available for checkout along with the over 100 more items from sewing machines to metal detectors currently in our collection.

**Music in the Library** – On May 30, our annual summer concert series inside the library will kick off featuring the Kokomo Time Band with some great oldies at 7 p.m. These after-hours concerts are a community staple, and run through September. Our June 27 concert will feature another local favorite, Creek Bend, for an evening of bluegrass. This concert series is funded by the Friends of the Collins Public Library.

**Canva Technology Class** – We are excited to host the TechKnow Lab for a class all about Canva on June 12. In particular, our staff who regularly work with this program are excited to learn how to improve their skills.

**Hot Dog Roast** – On June 21, the Collins Library will host their annual Hot Dog Roast! We will also hold outdoor activities and crafts, a bake sale from the Friends of the Library, and more. We are coordinating with other organizations like the Collins Fire Company’s car seat check and the Sheriff’s Department outreach to make this a community-wide event. Funds raised will go toward summer programming.

**Summer Reading Kick off** – On June 30, Collins Library will hold our Summer Reading Kick-off. With summer reading logs for kids, teens, and adults, this will be a summer of fun!

**Grand Island Memorial Library** – submitted by Bridgette Heintz, Director

**Outreach** – The Grand Island Golden Age Center, which is the community’s senior center, is visited monthly by Library Director **Bridgette Heintz**. An information table

is run which offers library services to the seniors, some of whom cannot make it to the library due to being either homebound or experiencing mobility issues. Services include reference, issuing library cards, and circulation of a small collection of materials which are brought to the Center. This has been a wonderful partnership in that the seniors have taken an interest in volunteering at the library and come to many of the programs.

Youth Services Librarian **Carly Spatar** conducts monthly outreaches at the following Grand Island locations: Kiddos Korner Preschool, Jack & Jill Community Preschool, and St. Timothy's Childcare Center. Her outreach, which include mini story times and speaking about the library to the children, are a great introduction to the B&ECPL for our smallest patrons, and the children love her.

**Book Club** - Run by the Friends of The Grand Island Memorial Library, the book club has grown to approximately 30 participants. The group has asked Bridgette to give a presentation on Libby and Hoopla in order to take advantage of every book format the library has to offer. That presentation will take place at the beginning of their next meeting on May 13 where *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver will be discussed.

**Glow Party** - A special thank you to the Central Library's Youth Services Group and their new Fragile Use Items Program Kits. Because of this collection, Carly Spatar was able to run two Glow Parties back-to-back on April 16 during spring break for the community. A 'glow party' is a dance party for families, run in the semi-dark with black lights, neon accessories, and kid-friendly music. There were 68 in attendance between the two parties, and they were a hit! As this round was a beta test, stay tuned for another party this summer with even more fun stuff added.

**Annual Easter Event** - In collaboration with the Grand Island Recreation Department, the Grand Island Golden Age Center, and Kornerstone Coffee, the annual Easter event was another smash hit! This year's event saw 1,096 visitors and always includes an outdoor Easter egg trail through Veterans Park, craft stations inside the library, pictures with the Easter Bunny, a bake sale, basket raffles, and coffee to keep the adults moving! This collaboration has been going strong for 7 years now and keeps on growing.

**Donated Book Sale** - Run by the Friends of the Grand Island Memorial Library, the latest book sale ran April 24 thru 26 and garnered just under \$2,400 among the book sale, new and renewed Friends annual memberships, and the bake sale. The library benefits from the book sale and membership fees through the Friends, and the bake sale funds go to maintenance for the Richard Earne Memorial Reading Garden. Speaking of...

**Richard Earne Memorial Reading Garden - Phase II** - The library's Reading Garden Committee began meeting again this year to finalize Phase II plans. The garden is named in memory of long-time trustee and former ACT President Richard Earne who was active with the B&ECPL for 42 years. Phase II will include expansion of the existing garden beds, a paver stone ground cover, flat-topped boulders to be used as

an enclosing barrier and extra seating, an archway over one of the two entrances, and new plants and trees to enhance the space. Look for more information in the coming months on the Grand Island Memorial Library webpage and Facebook page. Funding for this project is provided through various donations and fundraisers.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation. President of the Library Foundation, Jack Connors delivered a presentation on the history of the Library Foundation, their mission, and their current strategic planning initiative. President Connors went on to explain that the Library Foundation acts as a source of funding for the Library. Discussion ensued regarding the Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County, Inc. Next, President Connors shared that the Library Foundation Board is looking for new members. Chair El-Behairy asked if President Connors will share the packet regarding membership with the Board, and to describe the skill sets and experience they are looking for in a member. Discussion ensued about particular skills the Foundation is searching for and detailed further history regarding the Library Foundation. Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden mentioned that President Connors will also be at the ACT meeting at the Clarence Public Library on Saturday, May 31.

Agenda Item H – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden reminded the Board of the ACT meeting at the Clarence Public Library on Saturday, May 31.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Chair El-Behairy and Trustee Panty attended the Board meeting at the City of Tonawanda Public Library. Trustee Panty reported on that meeting, which included information on the senior activities being held there, speculation regarding a future soccer field, and parking. Following that, Chair El-Behairy encouraged Board members to visit their liaison libraries. She stated that if they did not know which library was theirs, to contact the Assistant to the Director.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K – New Business.

Agenda Item K.1 – Resolution 2025-14 - 2025 Budget Adjustments: Allocating 2024 Year-End Balance. ADD-Controller, Patronik summarized proposed Resolution 2025-14 as presented below.

RESOLUTION 2025-14

WHEREAS, at its regular meeting of December 17, 2024, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library adopted Resolution 2024-27 adopting the Library's 2025 budget, and

WHEREAS, a review of 2024 budgetary savings indicates funding is available to address the current needs of not only the Central Library but also system wide, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL approves amending the 2025 Operating Budget, increasing the use of fund balance revenue line and expenditures by \$275,000 as detailed in Exhibit 1, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes the Library Director or designee to transfer funds between the SAP accounts identified in Exhibit 1 as needed to accomplish the work listed in Exhibit 1.

Discussion ensued regarding various construction projects, and the funding needed for each individual project, as well as a breakdown on other uses of the \$275,000. Further discussion ensued regarding the rebranding effort. Trustee K. Johnson made the motion to approve. Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K.1.a – Walk-On Resolution 2025-15 – Amend Credit Card/Charge Account Policy. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Marinucci summarized proposed Resolution 2025-15 as presented below. Board members received a redlined, and clean copy of the proposed amendments to the Credit Card/Business Charge Account Policy.

RESOLUTION 2025-15

WHEREAS, The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's (B&ECPL) Board of Trustees adopted the Credit Card / Business Charge Account Policy on September 17, 2015 and the policy has been reviewed and amended periodically, most recently amended on May 17, 2018 and reviewed on April 6, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Credit Card / Business Charge Account Policy requires B&ECPL Board of Trustees approval to add or delete to the number of credit cards or business charge accounts; and

WHEREAS, B&ECPL System Administration recommends amendments to the policy to ensure for continuity of operations; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL adopts the proposed revisions to the B&ECPL's Credit Card / Business Charge Account Policy to supersede and replace the prevailing policy last amended May 17, 2018; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that a copy of the approved Credit Card / Business Charge Account Policy be posted on the B&ECPL's website.

Discussion ensued regarding the policy. Trustee K. Johnson made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K.2 – Executive Session. Chair El-Behairy asked to move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. She invited Deputy Director – Public Services, Darden and Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer, Marinucci to stay. Trustee Amodeo motioned to move into Executive Session. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and the Board moved into Executive Session at 4:53 p.m. The Board exited Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Sasiadek, and a second by Trustee Amodeo. A proposed resolution was drafted, and Trustee Bedenko summarized the proposed Resolution 2025-16 as presented below.

#### RESOLUTION 2025-16

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's Board of Trustees, in light of certain circumstances, finds that the business of the library must be carried out without hindrance or delay; and therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL appoints the Deputy Director of Public Services to be empowered to sign any necessary contracts until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL appoints the Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer to be empowered to be a secondary signer on any library bank accounts until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

Trustee Amodeo made the motion to approve. Trustee Bucki seconded, and this was approved unanimously. Following that, Chair El-Behairy proposed a special meeting of the Board to be scheduled on Thursday, May 22 at 4:30 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Bedenko with a second by Trustee Panty, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew  
Secretary