

PROPOSED
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
April 16, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, April 16, 2026 at the Central Library and remotely pursuant to due notice to trustees. The following members were present:

Carima El-Beairy, Chair
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq., Secretary
John D. Craik, Esq., Treasurer
Michael Amodeo, Esq.*
Nathaniel W. Barnes
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Adam Bojak, Esq.
Kimberly Johnson
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.
Elaine M. Panty

Chair El-Beairy called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

*Trustee Amodeo attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and was considered a full participant.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. None.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of March 19, 2026. Trustee Bedenko made a motion to approve the Minutes. Trustee Berens Bucki seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Beairy shared that she attended the *ACT Annual Workshop* on March 21. She congratulated ACT President Martha Buyer and staff for their effort in putting the program together. Chair El-Beairy also shared that it was well attended.

Chair El-Beairy stated that she attended the *Robert Creeley: Active Complement* exhibit at the University at Buffalo Art Galleries. He would have been 100 years old this year. Chair El-Beairy stated that it was a beautifully curated exhibit.

Chair El-Beairy went on to announce that the Clarence Public Library is having its *Family Literacy Night* event that evening from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. The event will feature visits from

the Buffalo Sabres Sabretooth, Oakley the therapy dog, and they will have structured activities promoting literacy.

Lastly, Chair El-Beairy stated that contracting member library liaison assignments will go out to Trustees. The Lackawanna Public Library, North Collins Public Library, and the Town of Collins Public Library still need liaisons.

Trustee Barnes arrived at 4:06 p.m.

Trustee Barnes agreed to be the liaison to the Town of Cheektowaga Public Libraries.

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Chair El-Beairy summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee
April 9, 2026

Present: Chair – Carima El-Beairy, Vice Chair - Christopher Sasiadek, members Sharon Kelly, and Elaine Panty. Also present were Interim Director Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director- Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki, and Assistant to the Director Cait Goodrich

Excused: Member Kimberly Johnson

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:30 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair El-Beairy began the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda. It was noted that the Search Committee should be added as Agenda Item E.3.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair El-Beairy stated that she will discuss her experience at the *Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Annual Workshop*, the Search Committee report, and that she attended the *Robert Creeley: Active Complement* exhibit at the University at Buffalo Art Galleries. She stated that she would also share the Clarence Public Library's *Family Literacy Night* event happening from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on April 16, 2026.

Library Administrative Manager Palicki reported that she will have the financials ending on February 28, 2026 to report on. She shared that the Library received the entirety of its money from Erie County, and that interest is trending higher.

She stated that she will continue monitoring utilities and New York State retirement throughout the year. Discussion ensued regarding when the Library budgets for retirement and when the actual rates are released, as well as, fluctuating utilities. Chair El-Behairy asked about Governor Kathy Hochul's proposed "Money in Your Pockets" legislation. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that proposed legislation focuses on auto insurance which may potentially assist with the Library's vehicle fleet in the future, however, it is to be determined. Further discussion ensued regarding the correlation between Erie County sales tax and property tax. Interim Director Darden shared that Mayor Sean Ryan will have a presentation at the Central Library on April 21 which will provide insight into the City of Buffalo budget and will be followed by a Q & A.

Discussion ensued regarding the new Assistant Deputy Director – Controller that is starting June 1. Chair El-Behairy expressed interest in inviting him to a Board meeting. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that she would provide his information to Chair El-Behairy and have his résumé and cover letter for the Board.

Chair El-Behairy continued through the proposed agenda. She shared that the Search Committee has conducted its first round of interviews, and four candidates have been selected to move forward. In-person interviews with the entire Board will be held on April 28.

For the Report of the Director, Interim Director Darden reported that Assistant Deputy Director Maria Lowe attended the Public Library Association's (PLA) Annual Conference in Minneapolis April 1 – 3. She and other Library staff who attended will share some of the things they learned on topics such as "building stronger communities and libraries" at a future Managers/Directors meeting.

Interim Director Darden shared that she is pleased to announce that as a member of the Ecosystem for Public Library Association (PLA) Task Group, she contributed to the Library Ecosystem Thinking in Public Libraries: A Field Guide which is now available on the ALA Ecosystem Initiative page [ALA Ecosystem Initiative | ALA](#) under Additional resources on the American Library Association (ALA) website.

Interim Director Darden and the Library Administrative Team will host three Staff Forums next week for library employees. One of the meetings will be held via Zoom, and the other two will be held at the Central Library. She stated that they have received about a dozen questions pertaining to topics, such as dates for the Civil Service Exam for a Librarian, building asbestos abatement, and library hours.

Interim Director Darden shared that she was interviewed by retired Judge Penny Wolfgang for her "On Target" radio talk show earlier this week. They discussed Love Your Library Month and the Library's Escape the Algorithm campaign. The program will air on Audacy radio stations including WGR AM and FM, WBEN, WKSE, and WWWS on April 11. Podcasts are also posted online.

Interim Director Darden noted she would provide an overview of the *ACT Annual Workshop* held at the Central Library on March 21 as well as Buffalo Mayor Sean Ryan's Women of the Year 2026 event on March 27. In addition, the Safety and Security Update will now be part of the Report of the Director. Director of Security and Safety Management Aaron Swan will provide an overview of security in the Buffalo Libraries, including the Central Library.

Vice Chair Sasiadek inquired about the interviews on April 28 and the need for public notice. Chair El-Behairy stated that a public notice will be sent out. Due to the nature of the interviews and that it involves discussions regarding employment, the Board will call the meeting to order then enter into executive session.

Chair El-Behairy continued through the proposed agenda. Board Members will be provided their contracting member libraries.

There being no further business, Trustee Panty motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Kelly seconded. The meeting ended at 4:52 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee. Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki summarized the Budget and Finance Committee meeting that was held on March 19. The report is included below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees
Budget and Finance Committee Minutes
March 19, 2026

Present: Budget and Finance Committee Members Nathaniel Barnes, Alan Bedenko, Carima El-Behairy, and Kimberly Johnson. Also present were Interim Director Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki, and Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich.

The meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee began at 5:12 p.m. A quorum was present.

Library Administrative Manager Palicki began the meeting by presenting the Budget and Finance Committee with the 2026 operating budget change compared to 2025. Library Administrative Manager Palicki also shared the status of the Library fund balance as of December 31, 2025. Discussion ensued regarding how fund balance can be used such as one-time large expenses, furniture, or fixtures.

Further discussion ensued regarding how much of the fund balance the Library saves, interest earnings, New York Cooperative Liquid Assets Securities System (NYCLASS),

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the importance of advocacy, and alternate sources of income such as merchandise, library events, etc.

With no further business, on a motion by Trustee Johnson, seconded by Trustee El-Behairy, the Budget and Finance Committee adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Library Administrative Manager Palicki summarized the Monthly Financial Report ending on February 28, 2026. Discussion ensued regarding interest rate earnings, personnel costs, retirement, and the New York State budget. Further discussion continued regarding utilities, use of fund balance, and New York State Aid.

Agenda Item E.3 – Search Committee. Chair El-Behairy summarized the Search Committee reports as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees –
Search Committee March 24, 2026

Present: Chair Carima El-Behairy, members Michael Amodeo*, Christine Bartholomew*, Kathleen Berens Bucki*, John Craik*, Kimberly Johnson*, Joel Moore*, Elaine Panty, and Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Representative Martha Buyer*. Also present via Zoom was Bradbury Miller Associates Representative Briana Trudell.

*Members attended the meeting remotely.

The meeting of the Search Committee began at 4:30 p.m.

At 4:31 p.m. Member Panty moved to enter executive session to consider candidates for the director position. Member Bartholomew seconded. Briana Trudell was invited to stay for the executive session as a representative from the Bradbury Miller Associates search firm.

At 5:56 p.m. Member Panty moved to exit executive session, seconded by Member Bartholomew.

With no further business, on a motion from Member Panty seconded by Member Johnson the meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees –
Search Committee April 6, 2026

Present: Chair Carima El-Behairy*, members Michael Amodeo*, Christine Bartholomew*, Kathleen Berens Bucki*, John Craik*, Kimberly Johnson*, Joel Moore*, Elaine Panty*, and

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Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Representative Martha Buyer*. Also present via Zoom was Bradbury Miller Associates Representative Briana Trudell.

*Members attended the meeting remotely.

The meeting of the Search Committee began at 1:00 p.m.

At 1:03 p.m. Member Panty moved to enter executive session to consider candidates for the director position. Member Johnson seconded. Briana Trudell was invited to stay for the executive session as a representative from the Bradbury Miller Associates search firm.

At 4:15 p.m. Member Panty moved to exit executive session, seconded by Member Amodeo.

With no further business, on a motion from Member Buyer seconded by Member Craik the meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees –
Search Committee April 7, 2026

Present: Chair Carima El-Behairy*, members Michael Amodeo*, Kathleen Berens Bucki*, John Craik*, Kimberly Johnson*, Joel Moore*, Elaine Panty*, and Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Representative Martha Buyer*. Also present via Zoom was Bradbury Miller Associates Representative Briana Trudell.

*Members attended the meeting remotely.

The meeting of the Search Committee began at 3:12 p.m.

At 3:13 p.m. Member Panty moved to enter executive session to consider candidates for the director position. Member Bucki seconded. Briana Trudell was invited to stay for the executive session as a representative from the Bradbury Miller Associates search firm.

At 5:52 p.m. Member Moore moved to exit executive session, seconded by Member Panty.

With no further business, on a motion from Member Buyer seconded by Member Amodeo the meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Chair El-Behairy shared that the Search Committee has narrowed the candidates down to four. The final interview dates are scheduled for April 27 and April 28. Discussion ensued regarding the schedule for the final interview dates. The Board is invited to the interviews on April 28 beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Interim Director Dorinda Darden began her report by sharing that nearly 85 Library employees attended one of three *Staff Forums* via Zoom or in person. *Staff Forums* provide employees the opportunity to ask questions of the Library Administrative Team. More than a dozen topics were covered including: updates on the librarians' civil service exam, the Central Library's *Space Utilization Study*, the *Passport to Reading* program this summer, hiring timeline for the new system director, technology upgrades in meeting rooms, email communications about health and wellness benefits, teens in the library during school hours, security, impact of Buffalo's budget on libraries, Sirsi Workflows, and more.

Interim Director Darden stated that she attended Buffalo Mayor Sean Ryan's *Women of the Year 2026* ceremony and reception for *Women's History Month* honoring Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Faustina Palmatier, and Gina Burkhardt held on March 27. She expressed that it was a wonderful tribute to these extraordinary women. At the event, Interim Director Darden had an opportunity to speak with both Mayor Ryan and Deputy Erie County Executive Lisa Chimera. As a note to the Board, Interim Director Darden shared that the Mayor will hold a public session titled "Breaking Down the Budget," at the Central Library on April 21 from 5:30 -7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium.

Planning is underway for a May 8 *Community Conversation* event hosted by the 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition – of which the Library is a founding member. Interim Director Darden solemnly shared that May 14 will mark the fourth year since the Tops massacre. The Library is playing a key role in managing the oral history collections for the community impacted by this horrific event.

Interim Director Darden stated that she attended the monthly *Public Library System (PLS) Directors* virtual meeting this afternoon and wanted to share that the Upper Hudson Library System Executive Director Chris Sagaas, gave praise to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. Interim Director Darden hosted him here in March. He took a tour, met with Rare Book Curator Heather Gring, and was very impressed with the Library's invaluable resources, such as the Mark Twain Room.

During the same meeting, State Librarian Lauren Moore, and Division of Library Development Specialist Natalie McDonough (who visited the Central Library last year), echoed his sentiments and encouraged others to visit the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

Interim Director Darden announced that she will be attending the Clarence Public Library's *Family Literacy Night* that evening. She then shared other community events that she will be attending which include:

The *State of the County* address presented by Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz at Shea's Performing Arts, and the Just Buffalo Literary Center's *BABEL Author Series* featuring author Imani Perry held at Kleinhans Music Hall on April 23. She stated that she

also plans to attend the *Dedication of the Richard Earne Memorial Reading Garden* held at the Grand Island Memorial Library on May 13, which is in honor of the late Grand Island Memorial Library Trustee and ACT President Richard Earne.

Interim Director Darden proudly encouraged the Board to save the date and gather their new children's books in preparation for Project Flight's *Books for Kids* campaign, of which the Library is a longstanding partner. The *Books for Kids* campaign works with Wegmans, WGRZ-TV Channel 2, Buffalo News, and Townsquare Media, the campaign runs May 1 – 31 in our libraries with a live book drive at Wegmans on Sheridan Drive on May 15.

Lastly, Interim Director Darden introduced Director of Security and Safety Management Aaron Swan, who provided an overview of security at the Central Library and Buffalo Branches. Discussion ensued regarding security, and clarification on a few incidents that occurred at the Central Library. Interim Director Darden shared that moving forward she will provide an update on security during her monthly report.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
March 2026**



The **Isaías González-Soto Auditorium Dedication Ceremony** in honor of retired educator and Hispanic community leader Dr. Tamara O. Alsace took place on March 7. The Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York and the Library hosted the program. 70 people attended. Speakers included: President of the Hispanic Heritage Council Casimiro D. Rodriguez, Sr., Honoree Dr. Alsace, Isaías González-Soto Branch Library Manager **Christine Webb**, New York State Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera, Buffalo's Niagara District Common Council Member David Rivera, City of Buffalo Deputy Mayor Eugenio Russi, as well as, Chief of Staff for Senator April N.M. Baskin Dr. Callie Johnson, Erie County Legislator Lawrence Dupre, and Assistant Deputy Director **Maria Lowe**. Also in attendance were Interim Library Director **Dorinda Darden**, Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino**, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Chair **Carima El-Behairy**, Trustee **Adam Bojak**, and Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) President and Aurora Town Public Library Trustee **Martha Buyer**, as well as other staff and community members. The event featured performances from youth musicians and refreshments for all. A special thank you to Library Display Artist **Dawn Stanton**, **Christine Webb**, Supervisor of Building Operations & Maintenance **Mark Kross**, and **Joy Testa Cinquino** for their assistance with coordinating the program.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library applied to host the prestigious *Pulitzer on the Road*, a new traveling exhibition from the American Library Association (ALA) and the Pulitzer Prize Board. Our robust application included proposed public programming. It was created by Marketing Manager **Sean Piazza** and included letters of support from award-winning journalist Margaret Sullivan, award-winning editorial cartoonist Adam Zyglis, Shea's Performing Arts Center President Brian Higgins, and Visit Buffalo Niagara President Patrick Kaler, as well as letters of endorsements from Buffalo Toronto Public Media and Just Buffalo Literary Center.

Two public programs in March, created by the Development & Communications department including *Sunday Concerts @ Central* featuring multi-instrumentalists Kody & Herren were well received. There were 38 attendees. (Boston Free Library Director **Lydia Herren** performs in the duo.) Curator and writer Schondra Aytch presented the *Ladies First Project* documentary about local women in hip-hop, 90 people attended.

Blind Date with a Banned Book - Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** participated in Buffalo Toronto Public Media's *Blind Date with a Banned Book* event at their studio on March 7. The event featured a screening of the new Independent Lens documentary, *The Librarians* followed by a discussion about intellectual freedom and the importance of Librarians in our communities with 75 people in attendance.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Programs - In celebration of *Development Disabilities Awareness Month*, Erie County Office for People with Disabilities presented the *Spread the Word to End the R-Word* event in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on March 4. The program consisted of a proclamation from Deputy Erie County Executive Lisa Chimera, a panel discussion about the cause, and tabling from over 20 community partners. There were 150 attendees.



Photos - (right to left) tabling at the Central Library for the *Spread the Word to End the R-Word* event, Deputy Erie County Executive Lisa Chimera presenting a proclamation, and a photo of the panel

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, in partnership with the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities and ACCESS-VR, hosted the *Spring Diversity Career Fair* at the Central Library on March 26. Representatives from 30 local businesses and organizations were on hand to seek out employees and share their resources with over 200 people in attendance.

Reclaiming the Frame-ups of Geraldine Pointer and Martin Sostre - The Special Collections Department hosted the *Reclaiming the Frame-ups of Geraldine Pointer and Martin Sostre* on March 19 in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library. This presentation was about the 1967 arrest of Martin Sostre and Geraldine Pointer, after

authorities fabricated drug trafficking charges to shut down Sostre's radical Afro Asian Bookshop on Jefferson Avenue, a center of local Black liberation activism. Public Historian James Coughlin provided insight into this infamous incident on Buffalo's East Side and shared current community efforts to organize and continue Sostre and Pointer's legacies by reclaiming and teaching of Buffalo's radical movements against state suppression. Ms. Pointer and her son Terrance were present and shared their experiences about that time and the efforts going forward to exonerate Ms. Pointer.

Central's Teen Advisory Group (TAG) hosted its annual *Egg Hunt* in conjunction with the Children's Room on March 28. TAG members provided face painting, pin the tail on the bunny, and hid prize-filled eggs hidden for children to find. This was a popular program with 83 participants.

The North Park Branch Library wrapped up its third annual *Taco Trials* winter reading challenge resulting in a total of 7,040 minutes read by participating children. From January until March 7, readers could turn in one reading ticket in exchange for one prize from the library's big bowl of prizes and a coupon to Mighty Taco. Mighty Taco, a local Western New York business, was an official sponsor of the reading challenge for the second year in a row. The reader who turned in the most tickets was presented with a certificate, library water bottle, and Mighty Taco sticker.

1. Programs and Outreach

Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

- *Cookbook Club*
- *Weekly Wednesday Movie Matinee*
- *Chess Club and Clinic*
- *3D Printing Certification Class*
- *Noon Yoga Recharge* hosted by Parkside Yoga
- *Universal Anime Saturday: Studio Ghibli's Princess Mononoke*
- *Speculative Fiction Book Club*
- *Tea Blend Workshop*
- *Blind Date with an International Book*
- *Dungeons and Dragon drop-in group*

Central Library – Teen Services

- *Teen Advisory Group (TAG)*
- *Brain Sparks Art Program*
- *After school Bingo*
- *After school crafts*

Central Library – Children's Services

- *Peaceful Playtime*– school-aged focused sensory hour
- *Pint-Sized Picassos*–toddler-focused painting program
- *Tiny Tots Storytime* - (0-3 year-olds)
- *Every Bottom Covered partnership* (Diaper giveaway)

Central Library - Special Collections/Rare Book Room

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- Book a Librarian Genealogy Sessions: *Ancestry Library Edition*, *AncestryDNA*
- Explore Buffalo Speaker Series: *My City Smells Like Cheerios: A History of Cereal in Western New York*
- Genealogy Training: *Getting Started with Ancestry Library Edition* (Virtual), *Roots & Relax* (Virtual), *Spotlight on the City of Buffalo* presented by Western New York Genealogical Society (Virtual), *Research Day at the Grosvenor Room with the Polish Genealogical Society of New York State*
- *Tarot Tuesday*
- Panel Discussion: *Who Rules Buffalo? A Field Guide to the Local Power Structure* – Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library hosted by Our City of Buffalo and Our City Action Buffalo
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*

Central Library – System Adult Outreach Services/ TechKnow Lab

- *Book a Librarian*
- *Book a Technology Trainer*
- *Notary Service*
- *Technology Training* - Orchard Park Senior Center and Tosh Collins Senior Center
- *Clothing Giveaway* - Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library presented by Amazing Women's Outreach Inc.
- *Wellness @ Central*
- *Buffalo Industry Career Fair* – Good Life Collective in Buffalo
- *Workshop: Demystifying New York State Civil Service and New York Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (NY HELPS) Program* – Central Library presented by the New York State Department of Civil Service
- *Income Tax Assistance* - TechKnow Lab at the Central Library presented by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

Mobile Services - Library on Wheels Bookmobile/Library2Go Van

In addition to regularly scheduled stops throughout the month, the Library on Wheels Bookmobile and the Library2 Go Van participated in the following special events:

- *It Takes a Village Action Organization Graduation Ceremony* – Central Library
- *Family Literacy Night* – Elmwood Village Charter School in Buffalo
- *Kindergarten Open House* - Westminster Charter School in Buffalo
- *Family Literacy Night* - Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School in Tonawanda
- *Tabling: Saturday Academy* – Buffalo Public School (BPS) #206 South Park High School

City Branch Libraries

All Branches: *Take n' Make craft bags and scavenger hunts*

Multiple Branches:

- *Chess*
- *Storytime*
- *Board game and video gaming groups*
- *Adult Book Groups by theme: General Fiction, Horror, Mystery, Tea & Book, Nature, and No-Pressure* (read what you want)
- *Book a Technology Trainer* appointments by Branch or Systems Staff

- *Movies*
- *LEGO clubs*
- *Kid, Teen and Adult Craft programs*
- *Acting Classes for Kids* ages 6-12 in partnership with [Second Generation Theatre](#) (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., Dudley, Isaías González-Soto)
- *Wellness programming and information* by Buffalo State Undergraduate School of Social Work Interns (North Park, Central, Leroy R. Coles, Jr.)
- *Free Legal Services* (Central & Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *Seed Library* (East Clinton & Central)
- *Dungeons & Dragons Drop-in* (Isaías González-Soto & Central)

Individual Branches:

The Buffalo Libraries provide a host of unique programs based on the needs and interest of their community. The following is a selection of programs offered this month:

- *Nintendo Switch gaming* (Crane)
- Local author Amanda Woomer presentation: *Ferocious Femininity: Female Vampires in Folklore, Film, and History* for Women's History Month
- *DMV services* provided by Erie County Clerk's Office (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *The Find Your Beat: Dance Class* in partnership with Devi Bollywood Dance and Legislator Taisha St. Jean Ford

Outreach:

- *Lighthouse Center (Medical campus and Jefferson Ave) preschool visit* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *Storytime outreach to BPS #37 Marva J. Daniel Futures Preparatory School Pre-K and Kindergarten* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *Saturday Academy at BPS #92 New BUILD Community School* (Leroy R. Coles, Jr.)
- *South Buffalo Food Pantry* (Dudley)

Tours and Visits:

Special Collections staff welcomed fifth graders from Elmwood Village Charter School for a *Library Scavenger Hunt* centered on the Buffalo Blizzard of 1977 in the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library on March 2. Approximately 80 students learned how to search through the Local History File and view newspapers preserved on microfilm. Also related to the history of the Blizzard of 1977, during visits on March 2 and March 4, the students received an introduction to the Grosvenor Room's LP player. Each student selected and listened to a 1976 record and observed its record jacket and album as part of hands-on activities to learn about the sound technology of the time.

Dorinda Darden hosted a tour of the Central Library on March 19 for the Executive Director of Upper Hudson Library System Chris Sagaas, who was visiting our region. In addition, Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring** provided him with a tour of the Rare Book Room collection.

Heather Gring hosted tours of the Rare Book Room exhibit *AP Gorny: Different from the Rest* for members of the Association of Contracting Library Trustees on March 21.

Heather Gring, Rare Book Clerk **Andrew Semo**, and Intern Kellen Corallo led a tour of the Rare Book collection on March 26, for 18 members of the Alliance Française de Buffalo. Kellen recently received his PhD in French Literature from the State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) and spoke to the group in French about some of his favorite texts in the collection.

The monthly Special Collections tour was conducted on March 28.

Visits for Central Children’s and Teen Department:

- *Elmwood Franklin Middle School* (Central, Teens)
- *Ellicottville Central School’s Literary Club* (Central, Teens)
- *Elmwood Village Charter School 6th grade* (4 classes) (Central, Children’s)
- *Martin Road Elementary 5th-grade* (8 classes) (Central, Children’s)
- *BPS #32 Bennett Park Montessori Preschool* (4 classes) (Central, Children’s)
- *Forest Elementary School 1st-grade classes* (4 classes) (Central, Children’s)

2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,925	8,232	385	966	506,433
Young Adult Print	545	1,433	97	313	68,494
Adult Print	3,518	9,752	871	2,196	1,752,012
Media	1,470	4,896	133	630	504,251
Other*	1,416	4,465	62	98	169,460
Subtotal	9,874	28,778	1,548	4,203	3,000,650

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	5,204	13,201	1,504	4,527	133,992
eAudiobooks	9,630	28,028	450	1,277	65,892
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,583
Subtotal	14,834	41,229	1,954	5,804	206,467

*The B&ECPL also provides access to eBooks, eAudiobooks, videos, and music albums. These titles are not included in the collection size total, as they are not owned by the B&ECPL.

All Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Total	24,708	70,007	3,502	10,007	3,207,117

Special Collections:

The Special Collections Department received and processed additional materials of the *Zorah Berry* collection from the Honorable Shirley Chisholm Library.

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – March 31, 2026	\$49,727.81

Highlights:

- Nine Western New York Rural Library grants were reviewed, edited, and submitted to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation on behalf of the Angola Public Library, Aurora Town Public Library, Boston Free Library, City of Tonawanda Public Library, Town of Collins Public Library, Concord Public Library, Elma Public Library, Grand Island Memorial Library, and the North Collins Public Library. **Joy Testa Cinquino** provided assistance to the libraries. Funding is part of a three-year \$500,000 grant secured by the Rochester Regional Library Resources Council and the Western New York Library Resources Council.
- A Community Regrant application for \$7,000 was submitted to Arts Services Inc. (ASI SCR) –New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) in support of an upcoming exhibition in the Rare Book Room for local artists to create new works while interpreting historic materials from the library’s collection. **Heather Gring** and Community Engagement Manager **Heather Quaintance** created the application.
- A New York State Conservation/Preservation Discretionary Grant for \$18,927 was submitted for the microfilm preservation of *The Buffalo News 2018-2020* in collaboration with **Susan Buttaccio** and Special Collections Librarian **Libby Stengel**.
- There were 104 items sold to Library employees and trustees during the *Love Your Library* deep discount week in March.

4. Facilities

Facilities:

On March 3, a project status meeting was held for the Central Library Switchgear Replacement Project. Punch-list items included installation of 12 light fixtures, installation of the final back-up control unit, and scheduling of a training session for maintenance staff to familiarize themselves with the new equipment. The lighting was completed during the last week of March, and the training session date is still being finalized. The back-up control unit should be delivered by the end of April, at which time it will be installed. This will close out the project.

On March 9, a punch-list walk through was conducted for the Central Library Interior Marble Column and Broadway Railing Repair Project. Items noted included adjustment of several metal straps around the bases and tops of the columns, some chipped corners on the bases of the columns, and development of rusting on the stainless-steel exterior railing. These are in the process of being alleviated, and a notice of substantial completion was accepted by Erie County on April 2.

On March 13, Bostwick Design Partnership held an estimate review meeting with Library staff to discuss its preliminary estimates for the Central Library Space Utilization Study.

Timelines for each phase were discussed as well as costs per square foot and overall estimates for each phase. This phase of the study will require additional discussion to ensure accurate timeline estimates and appropriate elements of each phase. An important consideration is the pre-work to start at the Phase 1 entrance: moving the Launch Pad to a temporary home in the second-floor gallery. To best understand the operational needs and corresponding scope/cost, this would require further dialogue.

On March 19, Erie County Department of Public Works (DPW), along with Jameson Roofing, Willett Builders, Inc., J.W. Danforth, and Library staff, held a pre-construction kick-off meeting in advance of the Central Library Roof Replacement and Green Roof Project. The project scope was reviewed and confirmed with each contractor as well as miscellaneous additions. The disconnection and reconnection of rooftop mechanical components was reviewed as well as plumbing requirements and installation of vegetative overburden. Other topics of discussion included project schedule; required documentation to start work; submittals and shop drawings; bi-weekly project meetings and inspections; deliveries and site usage; and payment submittal processes. The work is tentatively scheduled to start in late April (weather permitting.)

5. Staff Development

Native American Cultural Competency Training – Twenty-four managers and directors from throughout the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library system participated in a training from Native American Community Services on March 11. The training presented helpful insights into traditional Native American cultures and discussed historical traumas. Recommendations for greater understanding were presented so that efforts to support Native communities can be more effective in engaging people and providing culturally grounded services.

Youth Services Group *Escape from TAG* Training – The March 26 Youth Services Group meeting included a presentation by Orchard Park Librarian **Sam Bortle Adelman** explaining the process of partnering with an existing Teen Advisory Group to facilitate the planning, design, and execution of an all-ages Escape Room program. Twenty-five attendees viewed the live presentation, and a recording was posted to the intranet for further reference.

Erie County Leadership Training – On March 30 and 31, Library staff were invited to participate in Erie County's Leadership Training series. Six employees attended sessions on *Difficult Conversations*, *Building Trust*, and *Delegation* to build their leadership and supervisory skills.

Webinars – Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in March, with several staff members attending these sessions: *4-H STEM Adventures & Summer Reading Surprises for Unearth a Story* (from NYS Library), *Digital Accessibility & Your Library: Practical First Steps* (from ESLN), *ICE Operations and Public Libraries* (from NYS Library), and *Should It Stay or Should It Go?* (from CLRC).

6. Communications

Media Coverage

Carnegie Gift – Lackawanna Public Library & Hamburg Public Library

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library announced that two of its branches – Lackawanna Public Library and Hamburg Public Library – each received \$10,000 gifts from Carnegie Corporation of New York as part of a national initiative honoring the approximately 1,280 Carnegie libraries still serving communities across the country.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Press Release	Carnegie Gifts	Release: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library branches honored with two \$10,000 Gifts from Carnegie Corporation of New York (3/3)

Rare Books at Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Heather Gring sat down with Buffalo Rising's "Buffalo...Who Knew?" podcast and Frits Abell to spotlight the depth of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and Grosvenor Room's rare books collection.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Rare Book Room Collection	Buffalo Rising: "Buffalo....who knew" that The Grosvenor Houses Collection of 500,000 of Rare Literature Titles (3/4)

Women's Suffrage History

Spectrum News reporter Viktoria Hallikäär came to the Library's rare books archive to explore the women's suffrage movement through primary sources – pamphlets, correspondence, and anti-suffrage literature that documented not just the movement's heroes, but its opponents in their own words.

The Grosvenor Room guided the piece from inside the collection, reading from period documents to let the arguments of the era speak for themselves.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Suffragist History in Western New York	Spectrum News: Battle for women's suffrage draws parallels to modern activism (3/31)

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	40	118	8,655	12,612	322	16,410
Flickr	-	-	1,809	5,345	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,555	7,499	N/A	N/A
Instagram	17	38	2,573	32,314	148	10,188
Pinterest	-	1	37	81	-2	2,049
Twitter (X)	37	93	78	137	-13	10,349
Bluesky	14	32	65	139	6	1,307
YouTube	4	18	1,573	1,780	5	896
TikTok	1	2	764	2,912	1	1,084
Total	113	302	18,109	62,819	467	42,342

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

7. Partnerships

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

- Art Services, Inc.
- Buffalo United for Peace (UP)
- Buffalo Zoo
- Cassadaga Job Corps
- Catholic Health
- Comfort Cotton Collective
- Erie County Historical Commission
- Erie County Youth Board
- Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
- Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York, Inc.
- Jewish Museum of Buffalo
- Live Well Erie
- The Lupus Foundation of America
- Nickel City Comic Con
- People Inc.
- Project Flight
- Stitch Buffalo
- United Way of Buffalo & Erie County
- Western New York Books Art Center
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC)

8. Director Activities

List of Meetings and Events

Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden

March 2026

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
March 2, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 2, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
March 3, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 3, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
March 3, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
March 4, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
March 4, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Western New York Rural Library Grant Application Introductory Program
March 4, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
March 4, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
March 4, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
March 5, 2026	Event - Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) Adult Education Partner Breakfast
March 5, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
March 6, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 7, 2026	Event - Isaiás González-Soto Branch Library Auditorium Dedication Ceremony in Honor of Dr. Tamara O. Alsace with the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York
March 9, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
March 9, 2026	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Steering Committee
March 9, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
March 10, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 10, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
March 10, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO)
March 11, 2026	Meeting - Managers/Directors
March 11, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
March 11, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
March 11, 2026	Meeting - Michigan Street Preservation Corporation Board
March 12, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
March 12, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
March 12, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Executive Committee
March 13, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 13, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Tracy Palicki
March 13, 2026	Phone Meeting - Concord Public Library Director Jennifer Morris

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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March 16, 2026	Meeting - Melissa Goodrich
March 16, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
March 16, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 16, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Website Accessibility Update
March 16, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
March 17, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 17, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
March 17, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
March 17, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Western New York Library Resources Council Board of Trustees
March 18, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
March 18, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
March 18, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
March 18, 2026	Meeting - Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County
March 19, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
March 19, 2026	Library Visit - Executive Director Upper Hudson Library System Chris Sagaas
March 19, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
March 19, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System (PLS) Directors
March 19, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees
March 21, 2026	Event - Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Annual Workshop
March 23, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe, Angela Marinucci, and Aaron Swan
March 23, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
March 23, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 23, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
March 24, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
March 24, 2026	Meeting - ErieNet Local Development Corporation Annual Presentation
March 24, 2026	Meeting - ErieNet Local Development Corporation Board of Directors
March 25, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
March 25, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
March 25, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
March 26, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
March 26, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
March 26, 2026	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Shared Stewardship Work Session #1
March 27, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino

March 27, 2026	Event - City of Buffalo Mayor Sean M. Ryan's Women of the Year Ceremony and Reception honoring Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Faustina Palmatier, and Gina Burkhardt
March 30, 2026	Meeting - Aaron Swan
March 30, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
March 30, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
March 31, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
March 31, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci

Appendices
A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1853	4265	4990	10899
Children 5 and under	1552	3763	6924	17532
Children 6-11	4342	10721	7433	18038
Intergenerational/Combined	4759	14431	10356	25434
Teens	476	930	976	1978
Regular Total	12982	34110	30679	73881
Regular Total	12982	34110	30679	73881
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	17	33	113	256
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	0	0	0	0
Intergenerational/Combined	3	11	68	266
Teens	14	40	14	40
Live Virtual Total	34	84	195	562
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	8	12	221	501
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	6	394	1668
Intergenerational/Combined	10	25	3061	5559
Teens	0	0	0	0
Recorded Virtual Total	20	43	3676	7728
Virtual Total	54	127	3871	8290
Grand Total	13036	34237	34550	82171

*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/2026-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

B. Contracting Library Activity Reports

Newstead Public Library – submitted by Kristine Sutton, Director

The Newstead Public Library is one of the more rural libraries in Erie County, located on the Main Street of our Akron Village. As I am writing this today, the sun is out, it feels almost summer-like, and the library is bustling with families! Our location promotes foot traffic especially that of kids on their way home from school.

This past year has really reinforced to us that families are very interested in STEAM activities. Our program offerings reflect this interest along with the hands-on materials that we have in the library. Families often come in, meet up with friends and play with the many science and engineering materials that we have in the library. Our STEAM Penworthy Kits are constantly in circulation. Parents comment on our Homeschool Science classes that, "I'm so glad you do this here, so I don't have this mess at home!" I always say the messier the better!

Adult programming is booming also. We have a steady core group that just cannot get enough of our crafting classes. I am so proud of our Peace, Love, Yarn group that meets monthly. It is a great mix of all ages, in fact last month more than half of the crafters were under the ages of 12. We have seniors teaching kids, it is just wonderful. This group creates hats and scarves that our Friends group sells as a fundraiser, and they donate hats to Roswell Park. It is a great community endeavor.

This Library is a true community meeting space, whether it is for programming, reading, looking for a job on the computer, playing or just visiting. There is something to bring everyone in. The best day is to see happy, smiling faces in the library and that is every day!

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation. None.

Agenda Item H – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the *ACT Annual Workshop* was well received and there were 90 attendees. She shared that the next meeting will be on May 16 at the Town of Collins Public Library. Martha Buyer also shared that the Town of Collins Public Library Director Abigail Barten-McGowan is excited to share all of the wonderful things she and her staff are doing. There will be diverse presentations including one that discusses what procedures to take when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Officers come into the library.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Panty provided updates from the City of Tonawanda Public Library and the Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-49 – Amend Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy & Adopt Harassment Complaint Forms. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2025-49

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees adopted a Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy on December 18, 2018, and the policy has been reviewed and/or amended periodically, most recently on July 18, 2024, and

WHEREAS, Library System Administration has recommended updates to reflect recent amendments to the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy to align with the NYS Model Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy, and

WHEREAS, these changes have been vetted by Buffalo & Erie County Public Library legal counsel, and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee recommends the attached proposed amended Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy and Complaint of Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation forms for approval by the full Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library adopts the proposed revisions to the Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy to supersede and replace the existing policy last amended July 20, 2023, and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of the approved amended Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy replace the existing policy in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual as Chapter 8, Section 2, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the amended Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy replace the existing policy in each Contract Library’s annual agreement, Exhibit I, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library authorizes this policy be transmitted to all Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations, Contract Library Directors, and Contract Library Trustees and authorizes public posting on the Library’s website.

Trustee Panty made the motion to approve. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item K – New Business.

Agenda Item K.1 – Executive Session. The Board proposed entering into Executive Session to discuss a possible Conflict of Interest. On a motion by Trustee Bojak and a second by Trustee Johnson, the Board entered into Executive Session at 4:44 p.m.

The Board exited Executive Session at 5:04 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Bedenko and a second by Trustee Barnes. No action was taken.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Bedenko with a second by Trustee Barnes, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew
Secretary