

**PROPOSED  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
January 15, 2026**

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, January 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\*  
Prof. Christine P. Bartholomew, Esq., Secretary\*  
John D. Craik, Esq., Treasurer  
Nathaniel W. Barnes  
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.  
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS  
Adam Bojak, Esq.  
Kimberly Johnson  
Theodore K. Johnson  
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.

Chair El-Behairy called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

\*Vice Chair Sasiadek and Trustee Bartholomew attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and were considered full participants.

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

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of December 18, 2025. Trustee Berens Bucki and Trustee Bojak noticed a couple of errors in the Minutes. These errors would be corrected. Trustee Bedenko made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended. Trustee Craik seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Nominating Committee.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Nominating Committee  
January 8, 2026

Present: Chair Alan Bedenko\* and members Christine Bartholomew\*, Adam Bojak\*, Elaine Panty, and Christopher Sasiadek\*. Also present was Assistant to the Director Cait Goodrich

\*Chair Bedenko, and members Bartholomew, Bojak, and Sasiadek attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and were considered full participants.

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 2

The meeting of the Nominating Committee began at 3:30 p.m.

Following discussion, on a motion by Trustee Bojak seconded by Trustee Panty, the Committee unanimously approved the following Trustees for nomination at the January 15, 2026 Board Meeting:

**Chair:** Carima El-Behairy

**Vice Chair:** Christopher Sasiadek

**Secretary:** Christine Bartholomew

**Treasurer:** John Craik

On a motion by Trustee Bartholomew, seconded by Trustee Bojak, the Committee unanimously approved the following Trustees for nomination to the Executive Committee at the January 15, 2026 Board Meeting:

**Executive Committee Members:** Kimberly Johnson, Sharon Kelly, Elaine Panty, and Christopher Sasiadek

With no further business, the Nominating Committee adjourned at 3:34 p.m. on a motion by Trustee Panty and a second by Trustee Sasiadek.

Agenda Item D.1 – Election of Officers and Executive Committee. There were no new nominations from the floor. On a motion by Trustee T. Johnson, seconded by Trustee Kelly, nominations were closed, and the slate shared above was unanimously approved as presented.

Agenda Item E – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report by sharing with Trustees the current contracting library liaisons and the libraries they represent. Chair El-Behairy passed around a spreadsheet including each contracting library, their current liaison, Board meeting date and time, Board President, and Library Director. She encouraged Trustees that do not have a library to add their name and for Trustees to re-evaluate their current library to see if another location may be a better fit.

Agenda Item F – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item F.1 – Executive Committee. Trustee Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee  
January 8, 2026

Present: Chair – Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek\*, members Kimberly Johnson, Sharon Kelly, and Elaine Panty. Also present were Interim Director

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

### Page 3

Dorinda Darden, Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki, and Assistant to the Director Cait Goodrich

\* Vice Chair Sasiadek attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and was considered a full participant.

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. She asked if there would be any changes to the draft agenda. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that proposed Resolution 2025-48 – Amend Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook would move under Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. Proposed Resolution 2025-45 – Amend Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) & Anti-Harassment Policy and proposed Resolution 2025-49 – Amend Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy will be tabled until the Policy Committee can review the additional changes recommended by the Library's legal counsel.

Chair El-Behairy continued to review the proposed agenda. Discussion ensued regarding the Nominating Committee.

Vice Chair Sasiadek arrived virtually at 4:04 p.m.

Continuing through the proposed agenda, Chair El-Behairy asked for a status update regarding the Library Foundation. Trustee Johnson stated that a meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2026. Interim Director Darden suggested that the Report of the Foundation be added back onto the agenda for the February Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting. Further discussion ensued regarding meetings of the Library Foundation.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair El-Behairy stated that she would discuss Contracting Library Liaisons. She stated that several Trustees have multiple locations, and since there are newer members on the Board, the liaisons should be reviewed. Continued discussion ensued regarding Contracting Library Liaisons, and each Contracting Library's Board meeting schedules. Trustee Panty stated that she would like to continue her role as liaison to the City of Tonawanda and Town of Tonawanda Public Libraries.

For the Report of the Director, Interim Director Darden will remind the Board that the *45th Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* event will be held in the Dr. Eva M. Doyle Auditorium at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on January 15, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. She stated that she hopes the Board will plan to attend the celebration. The Honorable Clifford Bell will be the Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the event that will feature music and spoken word performances by students from the Buffalo Academy of Visual & Performing Arts, as well as local artists.

At next week's Board Meeting, Interim Director Darden stated that she would discuss an upcoming press conference and a Rare Book Room exhibit.

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 4

Discussion ensued regarding the annual Trustee Education Requirement and other various Library matters.

There being no further business, Trustee Kelly motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Johnson seconded. The meeting ended at 4:18 p.m.

Agenda Item F.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item F.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki summarized the Monthly Financial Report ending on November 30, 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding the Librarians Association contract, and health insurance waivers. Chair El-Behairy asked if Library Administrative Manager Palicki could schedule a Budget and Finance Committee for February.

Agenda Item F.3 – Search Committee. Chair El-Behairy reported that the Search Committee met on January 7, 2026 with Bradbury Miller Associates. She summarized the Search Committee report as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Search Committee  
January 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 was Special Projects Coordinator Erin Vest and Bradbury Miller Associates Representative Briana Trudell\*

\*Members attended the meeting remotely.

The informational meeting of the Search Committee began at 4:00 p.m. Following introductions, discussion ensued regarding the opportunities and challenges of the System Library Director role. The Search Committee then reviewed the process and timeline of the director search as presented by Bradbury Miller Associates.

With no further business, the Search Committee adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Agenda Item F.4 – Governance Committee. Trustee Bedenko summarized the Governance Committee report as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Governance Committee  
December 30, 2025

Present: Chair - Alan Bedenko, and Members John Craik, Carima El-Behairy, and Sharon Kelly. Also present were Bond, Schoeneck, and King Member Robert W. Patterson, and Assistant to the Director Caitlin Goodrich

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 5

The meeting of the Governance Committee began at 12:04 p.m. A quorum was present.

After a call of the roll, Member Kelly motioned to enter into Executive Session to discuss a whistleblower complaint. Member El-Behairy seconded, and the Governance Committee entered into Executive Session at 12:04 p.m. Bond, Schoeneck, and King Member Patterson was invited to stay for legal counsel.

On a motion by Member Kelly, and a second by Member Craik, the Governance Committee exited Executive Session at 12:23 p.m.

The Governance Committee conducted a review of the whistleblower complaint submitted by a reporter who requested confidentiality. Per the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's Whistleblower Policy, a report summarizing the findings will be given to the reporter by Wednesday, January 14.

With no further business, on a motion by Member Kelly, seconded by Member Craik, the Governance Committee adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Director. Interim Director Dorinda Darden began her report by sharing that the Library's *Online Winter Reading Contest – Chill Out and Read* is underway through February 28, for children, teens, and adults. Participants have already clocked 67,000 minutes of reading. There is a public and staff contest for chances to win great prizes. Every minute of reading earns participants one point. The grand prize for children and teens is a \$100 Visa gift card and a \$100 gift card to either Aldi, Tops, Walmart or Wegmans for adults. Interim Director Darden encouraged the Board to track their reading this winter. The link can be found on the Library's website homepage at [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org).

The Buffalo African American Museum in partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and many other cultural organizations will hold a press conference in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on January 29, 2026 at 10:00 a.m., announcing *Together as One*, a community-wide collaboration for Black History Month in February. The Library and other local cultural organizations will be offering programs throughout the month. In addition, the Central Library will host the Buffalo African American Museum's captivating Black History exhibit on the main floor. The Library's Black History Month programs include storytelling, jazz performances, book discussions, virtual author talks, showing of the movie *Harriet*, starring *Wicked*'s Cynthia Erivo, on the life of Harriet Tubman, read-ins and more. She stated that she hopes the Board will consider attending the press conference and the various programs.

The opening celebration of the Rare Book Room's new exhibit, *AP Gorny: Different from the Rest* will be held at the Central Library at 5:30 p.m. on January 29. Rare Book Curator Heather Gring and local artist, Anthony Peter (AP) Gorny will be present to talk about the makings of the exhibit, which displays books by AP purchased for our Rare Book Room Collection, as well as never-before-seen archival documentation and video footage.

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

### Page 6

Interim Director Darden noted that a total of \$546,989.98 was raised through donations to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library in 2025, a 20% increase from 2024. Some notable campaigns include the *Year End Appeal*, *Bucks for Books*, *Giving Tuesday*, as well as sales from the Library's *Online Store*. She thanked those Trustees who made a donation and/or attended one of the Library's fundraisers.

The *45th Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* will be held at 6:00 p.m. in the Dr. Eva M. Doyle Auditorium at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library, despite students from Buffalo Academy of Visual & Performing Arts not being able to participate due to the closing of Buffalo Public Schools because of inclement weather. She stated that she hopes Trustees will plan to attend after the Board Meeting. Honorable Clifford Bell will again be the Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the event that will feature music and spoken word performances by talented local artists.

Interim Director Darden shared that she sent a congratulatory letter to Mayor Sean Ryan. The letter mentioned that she is delighted to hear about the proposed efforts to create vibrancy in downtown Buffalo. These proposed efforts coincide with the Central Library's *Space Utilization Study*, which show how it is the Central Library's "ambition that we are not simply seen as a working library—but as an institution of value among libraries regionally and nationally."

Finally, Interim Director Darden shared that the Library is preparing for *Library Advocacy Day* in Albany on February 3. She stated that she would be attending, as well as Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Directors Joy Testa Cinquino and Maria Lowe, as well as Board Chair Carima El-Behairy, Trustee Kimberly Johnson, and library management from Grand Island, Newstead, Elma, and Hamburg. One of the pieces of information the Library will bring to Albany is the Return on Investment. Reviewing preliminary year-end 2025 statistics, the Library provided \$4.24 in services back to the community for every dollar received in county funding. The Return on Investment is based on the 2020 census population, the value of Library use, and the dollar amount received from property taxes. Interim Director Darden stated that as an organization, we work diligently to meet the service needs of our community while staying within budget. She thanked the Board for supporting the Library in that task.

Discussion ensued regarding the Library's fundraising efforts and alternatives to hoopla.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report**  
**December 2025**



**Author and Illustrator Visit** – Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** hosted Jeff Klein and Scott Wood, the author and illustrator of *You Should Have Seen Us Howling: When Buffalo Ruled the Inland Seas*, in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on December 3. They discussed their new graphic novel about the Buffalo waterfront, where the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal joined to create an inland crossroads that helped fuel the expansion of America.

**Memory Lab** – Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** spent the month of December setting up and training staff to use the new *Memory Lab* in the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library. The newest piece of equipment is a Media Conversion Station, which transfers VHS, 8 mm film, and more to a digital format. Special Collections staff has trained members of the public to use the technology, assisted partners by digitizing materials, and utilized the equipment to convert materials for the upcoming exhibit *AP Gorny: Different from the Rest*.

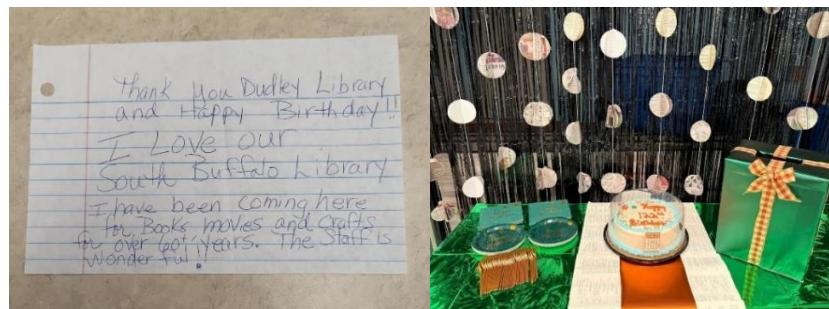
Staff hosted a party for Dudley's 122<sup>nd</sup> Birthday on December 16. Dudley Branch Manager **Zoe Grimes** used the event to solidify the library's place in the community by celebrating its long history and relevance. Dudley offered sugar cookie decorating, as the full name of the branch is the Joseph Pillsbury Dudley. Staff also used photos to create a retro scavenger hunt and tour that walked people through the library to show the physical location in the branch at different points in time. Lastly, they offered a word search based on the Dudley Branch Library's history.



Photos – (Left) Dudley Branch Library wall, including children's drawings from the B&ECPL Sesquicentennial Birthday in 1986. (Right) patrons in front of the original branch building in 1918.

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 8



Photos – (Left) a letter from a patron thanking the Dudley Branch Library, and wishing it a happy birthday. The patron shared that they have been visiting the library for 60+ years.

(Right) A cake for the Dudley Branch Library's 122<sup>nd</sup> Birthday.

On December 3, Central Adult Services Manager **Pamela Edholm** hosted a University of Buffalo Science Cafe titled “*Pathways to Stability: Meeting Needs and Reducing Legal System Contact.*” Dr. D. Michael Applegarth from the School of Social Work spoke on barriers and challenges that individuals face when incarcerated. After his presentation, there was a lively and engaging community discussion. A resource fair of organizations committed to addressing these challenges was set up in the concourse.

In December, a regular Central Launch Pad patron used the X-Tool laser cutter to make a series of Frank Lloyd Wright inspired lamps for various family members as holiday gift. This is one of many tools available to patrons in Central’s Maker Space.



Photo – Frank Lloyd Wright inspired lamp made with the X-Tool laser cutter in the Launch Pad.

In December, a retired English as a Second Language teacher expressed her gratitude to Launch Pad Librarian **Jordan Smith**, and the Launch Pad staff for their expertise and support in helping her learn to use the recording studio. The patron is working on a project, interviewing refugees, and said that many of the people she works with mention how important the Library has been to them as newcomers to the United States. You can access her interviews from her website: [Using Our Voices 716](#).

### 1. Programs and Outreach

#### Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

- *Cookbook Club*
- *Weekly Wednesday Movie Matinee*
- *Chess Club and Clinic*

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

### Page 9

- *Bad Art Night*
- *3D Printing Certification Class*
- *Noon Yoga Recharge* hosted by Parkside Yoga
- *Universal Anime Saturday*
- *Speculative Fiction Book Club*
- *Tea Blend Workshop*
- *Afternoon Art Break*
- *Trivia @ the Library!*
- *Stitch Circle*
- *Taoist Tai Chi*

#### **Central Library – Teen Services**

- *Decoden Cream Craft*
- *Teen Advisory Group (TAG)*
- *Brain Sparks Art Program*
- *After School Bingo*
- *Jewelry Making*

#### **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)
- *Graham Cracker House building*

#### **Central Library - Special Collections/Rare Book Room**

- *Using FamilySearch Full-Text Search for Genealogy* - Orchard Park Senior Center as part of Erie County’s University Express program
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*
- *Virtual Presentation - Resources for Cemeteries participating in the Tombstone Tours program in Celebration of America’s 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026*

#### **Central Library – System Adult Outreach Services/ TechKnow Lab**

- *Book a Librarian*
- *Book a Technology Trainer*
- *Clothing Giveaway* - Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library presented by Amazing Women’s Outreach Inc.
- *Notary Service*
- *Walk-up Tech Help*
- *Wellness @ Central*

#### **Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services**

- *Elementary Literacy Night* – Persistence Preparatory Academy Charter School in Buffalo
- *Storytime* – North Park Branch Library
- *Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) Kids Series: Jingle Bell Jam*

#### **Mobile Services - Library on Wheels Bookmobile/Library2Go Van**

In addition to regularly scheduled stops throughout the month, the Library on Wheels Bookmobile and the Library2Go Van participated in the following special events:

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

### Page 10

- Tabling: *Saturday Academy* – Buffalo Public School (BPS) # 97 Harvey Austin 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, Nature, Tea & Books 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*
- *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.)*
- *Gingerbread House Building*
- *Snow Globes*

##### **Individual Branches:**

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

- *Boondoggle Club (Elaine M. Panty)*
- *Twilight Zone Zone (Crane)*
- *Short Story Open Mic (Crane)*
- *DMV services provided by Erie County Clerk's Office (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)*
- *Cookie Decorating by Happy Oven Bakeshop (North Park)*
- *Public Forum, hosted by Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera: How One Big Beautiful Bill will Impact Healthcare Access in WNY*

#### **Outreach**

- *Lighthouse Center 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.)*

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

- Special Collections staff provided a tour of the Rare Book Room exhibit, *What Does It All Mean? Exploring the Dictionary* on December 23 and the monthly *Special Collections Tour* on December 27.
- Lockport City School's program: *My Brother's Keeper* (Central)
- Buffalo Academy of Science (Central)
- Frontier High School (Central)
- Boys Scout Troop (Central)

Minutes of the Board of Trustees  
Page 11

- *Frontier Middle School (Central)*

## 2. Collection Development

### Physical Collections\*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,272	29,013	279	3,351	503,883
Young Adult Print	285	4,702	83	974	68,327
Adult Print	2,521	40,965	621	8,362	1,753,976
Media	1,731	24,555	174	3,169	506,389
Other*	1,729	21,126	17	280	171,630
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8,538</b>	<b>120,361</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>16,136</b>	<b>3,004,205</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

### Electronic Collections\*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	20,530	67,638	2,164	16,850	139,302
eAudiobooks	21,751	110,425	850	5,182	70,624
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,559
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>42,281</b>	<b>178,063</b>	<b>3,014</b>	<b>22,032</b>	<b>216,485</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>50,819</b>	<b>298,424</b>	<b>4,188</b>	<b>38,168</b>	<b>3,220,690</b>

### Discontinuation of *hoopla* streaming service

The demand and cost to libraries for circulating electronic materials and online resources has increased dramatically over the years. The cost increases of digital materials, generally, and *hoopla* specifically, have outpaced the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's budget increases and this has had a negative impact on the amount of materials we are able to purchase. Unfortunately, we were forced to make the difficult decision to discontinue the *hoopla* streaming service effective **December 31, 2025**. By discontinuing the *hoopla* streaming service, the Library will be able to continue to grow our print collection while still offering OverDrive/Libby for downloadable eBooks, eMagazines, and eAudioBook that meet the needs and demands of the diverse communities we serve.

### Rare Book and Special Collections:

The Special Collections Department acquired a portrait of *Joseph P. Dudley* donated by **Zoe Grimes** on December 9. The painting of the Dudley Branch Library's namesake was found in the boiler room.

### 3. Fundraising

#### Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – December 31, 2025	\$546,989.98
Bucks for Books		\$61,767.37
Year-End Appeal		\$123,484.41

#### 2025 Highlights:

**\$546,989.98 was raised in 2025, a 20% increase from 2024.**

Some notable campaigns from 2025 were:

- 2025 Year-End Appeal – 1,379 donations were received in November and December 2025, raising \$123,484.41.
- Bucks for Books – 498 donations were received in 2025, raising \$61,767.37.
- Giving Tuesday – 114 donors supported the Library, raising \$7,428.24.
- Online Store – 1,156 items were sold, with the Library receiving \$24,772.68.

#### Mass Emails sent in December:

- Public Periodical – sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 95,000), 43% open rate.
- Happy Holidays – sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 95,000), 37% open rate.
- Happy 2026 – sent to all library cardholders that opted in to receive communications (over 95,000), 33% open rate.

### 4. Funding/Facilities

#### Funding:

On December 23, it was announced that the Certification has been signed by DASNY and SED for the FY2024-2025 (0386-25) NYS Library Construction Aid cycle. This means that the applicants from last year's round of applications have been awarded construction funds to use at their locations to fund construction related projects. Any public, association library, public library system chartered by the Regents of the State of New York or established by an act of the New York State Legislature is eligible to apply for State Aid for Library Construction to cover approved costs for the acquisition, construction, renovation, rehabilitation of public libraries, public library system headquarters, as well as broadband infrastructure projects.

The following libraries were awarded funding in the latest round of awards, with awards totaling \$2,119,647:

- **Central Library** - \$1,695,636 for Roof Replacement
- **Cheektowaga Public Library** - \$298,099 for Roof Replacement
- **Clarence Public Library** - \$49,161 for Boiler and AC Compressor Replacement

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

### Page 13

- **Elma Public Library** - \$23,956 for HVAC System Replacement
- **Lackawanna Public Library** - \$30,227 for Boiler & Hot Water Heater Replacement
- **Newstead Public Library** - \$22,568 for Fire System Replacement

#### **Facilities:**

On December 2, Erie County Department of Public Works (DPW), the Library, and Frey Electric held a meeting to discuss the upcoming Central Library Switchgear Replacement Project. Frey noted that prep work would be done during the week of December 8. The installation weekend of January 23-26, 2026 starting at 6:00 p.m. was confirmed, during which time the work crews would work in three continuous shifts through the weekend, with work concluding at 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 26. Frey confirmed with the Library that a staging area would be located in the boiler room.

On December 10, Library maintenance and facility staff met with the architecture team from CPL to begin the design phase of the Central Library Building Envelope Rehabilitation Project. The scope of work was reviewed and confirmed, with an objective of replacing 100% of the exterior caulk; resetting and securing marble panels that have shifted; repairing cracks; and repairing damaged stone in the planter beds on the Washington St. ramp. Base bid and alternates were also discussed and a schedule for advertising the RFP was agreed upon. This project is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2027. \$1,000,000 in County capital has also been secured to assist in the funding of this project.

## **5. Staff Development**

**Annual Compliance Training** – Human Resources is happy to announce all active staff completed required compliance training in 2025! In total, 564 employees completed the modules *Workplace Violence Prevention*, *Preventing Workplace Harassment*, and *Cybersecurity Awareness* provided by Traliant, an online compliance-training platform. The completion of these trainings fulfills the Library's requirements under New York State and Erie County laws as well as New York State Library Minimum Standards.

**Genealogy Research Training** – On December 2 and 9, Genealogist Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** presented a two-part training for library staff to master the art of online family history research, emphasizing practical resources available across all Library locations while highlighting specialized Grosvenor Room databases and services. This session was hosted at the Audubon Library with nine staff attending.

**Webinars** – Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in December, with several staff members attending these sessions: *2025 Rural Library Network eSummit* (from Rural Libraries Network), *Web Accessibility: Three Things You Can Do Right Now* (from NYS Library), and *Why Do We Fall for Misinformation?* (from WebJunction).

## **6. Communications**

#### **Media Coverage**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library garnered coverage across a range of topics in December. Those pieces are included below.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 14

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Leadership	<a href="#">Buffalo Business First: These 20 nonprofits got new leadership in 2025</a> (12/4)
Earned Media	Hoopla Discontinuation	<a href="#">Spectrum News: Buffalo &amp; Erie County Public Library to discontinue popular service</a> (12/26)
Earned Media	Hoopla Discontinuation	<a href="#">Bee Newspapers: Last call for hoopla as Buffalo &amp; Erie County Public Library to Discontinue Popular Streaming Service</a> (12/29)

**Social Media:**

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	55	1,068	2,591	39,647	183	15,852
Flickr	-	112	1,200	28,737	-	59
Google Ads <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	2,335	30,266	N/A	N/A
Instagram	12	203	9,757	108,686	59	9,317
Pinterest	-	289	19	546	4	2,051
Twitter (X)	49	649	36	2,114	4	10,385
Bluesky	25	211	72	1,027	10	1,257
YouTube	12	75	227	9,860	1	877
TikTok	1	7	441	8,049	-1	1,068
<b>Total</b>	154	2,614	16,678	228,932	260	40,866

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

**The Library's Graphic's Department** edited and modified the "MY ACCOUNT" brochure and updated the Wi-Fi signage, in addition to several other projects for 37 libraries including newsletters and mass emails. **Dawn Stanton** and **Helen Shandraw** have also worked on designing the Rare Book Room display walls for the upcoming Exhibit on artist, printmaker, photographer, performer, (etc.) AP Gorny.

## 7. Partnerships

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

- Buffalo African American Museum
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Children's Centers in the Courts
- Erie County Historical Commission
- Erie County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)
- Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum

## Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 15

- First Shiloh Baptist Church
- Live Well Erie
- Outreach Coordinators in New York's Public Library Systems
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC)
- Starlight Studios
- Stitch Buffalo
- Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park
- Wooden Cities
- University at Buffalo's Department of Indigenous Studies
- Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center

Planning is underway for the 45th Annual Community Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Thursday, January 15 at Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library. (Last year's program was canceled due to inclement weather.) The program, hosted by community leader "Brother" Clifford Bell and the Library will feature performances by local musicians, poets, and students from the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts.

### 8. Director Activities

#### List of Meetings and Events

Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden

December 2025

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
December 3, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
December 3, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
December 3, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci and Emily Patronik
December 3, 2025	Meeting - Zonta Club of Kenmore
December 4, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
December 4, 2025	Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Advocacy Meeting - New York State Assembly Member Angelo Morinello
December 4, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
December 5, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
December 8, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
December 8, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
December 8, 2025	Meeting with Andrew Maines
December 9, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
December 9, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
December 9, 2025	Virtual Meeting - New York Alliance of Library Systems (NYALS)
December 9, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO)
December 9, 2025	Virtual Meeting - New York State Librarian Lauren Moore, Kent Sopris from New York State Department of Education's Office of Government Relations, and New York State Assembly Member Karen McMahon

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 16

December 9, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Ecosystem for Public Library Association (PLA)
December 10, 2025	Meeting - Managers/Directors
December 10, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
December 10, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
December 10, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Michigan Street Preservation Corporation Board
December 11, 2025	Meeting - Maria Lowe
December 11, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
December 11, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
December 11, 2025	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Executive Committee
December 12, 2025	Meeting - Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Grant at Richmond Memorial Library in Batavia, NY
December 15, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
December 15, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines
December 15, 2025	Virtual Meeting - American Library Association (ALA) Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA)
December 16, 2025	Media Event - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library with New York State Assembly Member Jonathan Rivera at Williamsville Branch Library
December 16, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
December 16, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Ecosystem for Public Library Association (PLA)
December 17, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
December 17, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
December 17, 2025	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
December 18, 2025	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
December 18, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Bostwick Design Partnership
December 18, 2025	Virtual Meeting - Public Library Systems (PLS) Directors
December 18, 2025	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees
December 19, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Erin Vest, and Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC
December 19, 2025	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
December 19, 2025	Meeting - Maureen Germaine
December 22, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
December 22, 2025	Meeting - Andrew Maines
December 23, 2025	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
December 23, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
December 23, 2025	Meeting - Emily Patronik
December 24, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
December 29, 2025	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
December 29, 2025	Meeting - Administrative Team
December 30, 2025	Meeting - Judy Fachko, Angela Marinucci

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 17

December 30, 2025	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
December 30, 2025	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
December 31, 2025	Meeting - Cait Goodrich

## Appendices

### A. Monthly Statistics

#### System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	1307	15088	3261	46736
Children 5 and under	1438	15807	3755	65840
Children 6-11	2821	37856	4638	66112
Intergenerational/Combined	3589	59783	9158	144462
Teens	200	3479	557	8089
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>9355</b>	<b>132013</b>	<b>21369</b>	<b>331239</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>9355</b>	<b>132013</b>	<b>21369</b>	<b>331239</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	8	227	73	1938
Children 5 and under	0	8	0	169
Children 6-11	0	7	0	193
Intergenerational/Combined	3	58	43	1157
Teens	13	48	12	113
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>3570</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	4	47	96	2560
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	3	27	718	6167
Intergenerational/Combined	9	107	1957	15272
Teens	0	10	0	10
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>2771</b>	<b>24009</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>2899</b>	<b>27579</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9395</b>	<b>132552</b>	<b>24268</b>	<b>358818</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, 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

### Amherst Public Libraries – submitted by Kristi Dougherty, Director

The end of the year is always a busy time for the libraries. Various events included:

Holiday Storytimes & Santa visits, Seasonal Sing-Alongs, Festival of Lights Celebration, Author visits, Holiday Card & Bow Making presented by Smallwood Garden Club, Adult Yoga, English Conversation Group, Book Clubs, Technology Training, Jewelry Making, Winter Magic Show, LEGO Fest, Lake Effect Flute Choir Performance, Guitar Quartet Concert, Noon Year's Eve Parties, and more!

**Pet Pics with Santa** – This new event, coordinated by Librarian Trainee **Katherine Pizzuto** with assistance from Branch Manager **Beth Staebell**, at the Hon. Shirley Chisholm (Audubon) Library, was very popular with human and furry patrons! Library Clerk **Pam Steinbrenner** helped to wrangle Santa and his visitors at the various events.



*Photos – Santa posing with various families and animals.*

**The 2025 World Community Family Series - Festival of Lights** (Clearfield Library) – This session featured crafts to learn about traditions that use the symbol of light. Librarian **Joan Stoltman** created a diverse assortment of educational activities.

**Jewelry Making** - Clearfield Library Branch Manager **Mary Lou Kinyon** continues to collaborate with the Bead Gallery for jewelry making workshops at the various Amherst branches.

**Mahjong Club** (Eggertsville-Snyder Library) – Registrants can join a table or sign up for a party of four! Easy Classic Chinese Style and American are available, with tiles, mats, and racks provided. Librarian **Mary Koenig** has invested time to learn the game and maintain regular attendees, in addition to their popular Adult Craft Club and Pokémon Clubs.

**Early Literacy** - Eggertsville-Snyder Library Branch Manager **Angela Kelkenberg** continues to read stories and coordinate activities with a local specialized early childhood center, in addition to weekly story time sessions.

**Early Childhood Outreach** (Williamsville Library) – Librarian **Wanda Collins** continues to welcome nearby daycare center students to visit the library for story time and goes out to visit various locations to promote literacy when weather is an issue.

The beginning of the year features big book sales, which help to fund events season-wide.

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 19

Agenda Item H – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the annual ACT Meeting will be held at the Central Library on Saturday, March 21. She and other ACT Trustees will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to begin coordinating the event.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Berens Bucki stated that she attended the Amherst Public Library's Board Meeting on January 13. She shared that they have a new Board President David Saia. They also have a new Trustee Samantha Nephew who is also on the Library Foundation. Trustee Berens Bucki reported that the Audubon Branch Library has been renamed the Honorable Shirley Chisholm Branch Library. Next, she shared that they are in the middle of one of their book sales, which are always successful.

Trustee Berens Bucki also shared that the Honorable Shirley Chisholm Branch Library has an offer for a free mural in the children's area, which will focus on the local bird population.

Lastly, Trustee Berens Bucki mentioned that Board President David Saia wanted to praise the eMaterial purchaser for the Library's outstanding collection. Interim Director Darden stated that would be the Library's Collection Development Librarian Kelly Donovan.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-48 – Amendments to Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2025-48**

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has the power and duty to determine and carry out all policies and principles pertaining to operations of the library and the exclusive power and duty to control library personnel, and

WHEREAS, on December 18, 2014, the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library approved and adopted the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Employee Handbook to be effective January 1, 2015, and

WHEREAS, thereafter, each Contracting Library Board within the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System adopted same, and

WHEREAS, On December 20, 2018 the Library Board approved Resolution 2018-44 directing annual review by the Policy Committee of all changes made by Human

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Page 20

Resources to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook in the course of the 12 months prior to the Committee's review with subsequent Committee recommendation for approval by the full Board, and

WHEREAS, Human Resources has since made updates to policies and procedures in the Manual and Handbook and reported to the Policy Committee accordingly, and

WHEREAS, after review in 2025, Human Resources has proposed a wholesale cleanup of the documents effective January 1, 2026, including updates for consistency of style and language, to update references and information to be in line with collective bargaining agreements' language and changes, to update references to procedures and forms that have been updated in the course of normal business, and to streamline the Handbook, and

WHEREAS, on November 20, 2025, the Policy Committee reviewed the changes and recommends approval by the full Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library approves the revisions to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the revised Manual and Handbook be posted to the Library website and distributed to all departments and contract libraries, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that Human Resources will continue to update the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual and the Employee Handbook as necessary and will distribute updates to all departments and contract libraries as set forth in the Introduction to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

Discussion ensued regarding proposed amendments. Trustee Berens Bucki noticed an error in the summary. Trustee Bedenko made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Craik seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item K – New Business. Chair El-Behairy shared that the Board received the Conflict of Interest Policy in their packets and tasked them with sending in their signed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statements. She also encouraged them to fill out the Committee Volunteer Form.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Kelly with a second by Trustee K. Johnson, the meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew  
Secretary