

PROPOSED
MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
June 18, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, June 18, 2026 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
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS
Adam Bojak, Esq.*
Kimberly Johnson
Joel C. Moore, Esq.
Elaine M. Panty

*Trustees Bartholomew and Bojak attended the meeting remotely due to extraordinary circumstances and were considered full participants.

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.

Agenda Item B – Approval/Changes to the Agenda. Chair El-Behairy noted that a walk-on proposed resolution will be introduced under Agenda Item K – New Business. Each Board Member was provided a copy of the proposed resolution at their seat, as well as, supplemental information.

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of May 21, 2026. Trustee Panty made a motion to approve the Minutes. Trustee Bedenko seconded, and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda Item D – Report of the Chair. Chair El-Behairy began her report by welcoming Assistant Deputy Director – Controller James Mitaritonna. Chair El-Behairy went on to highlight two important dates. After the Library Board meeting on September 17 there will be a welcoming reception for newly appointed Director Christine Schonhart. The Library Board of Trustees will be holding their October meeting at the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library. It is the 40th anniversary of the library located in the Riverside neighborhood. It is also the 5-year anniversary of the renaming of the Riverside Branch Library after Trustee Panty. Chair El-Behairy shared that a reception will be held before the Board meeting on October 15.

Chair El-Behairy noted that the Virtual Court Access Network (VCAN) ribbon cutting ceremony in partnership with the New York State 8th Judicial District was held at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on June 17. She explained that this will give patrons of the library court system accessibility.

Lastly, Chair El-Behairy reminded everyone about the *Passport to Reading* program. She happily exclaimed that she completed her visits to all 37 libraries and received her golden Library card!

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

Agenda Item E.1 – Executive Committee. Vice Chair Sasiadek summarized the Executive Committee report as presented below. Vice Chair Sasiadek highlighted that libraries are now operating on summer hours. He encouraged everyone to pay attention to their local library because their hours may have changed. Vice Chair Sasiadek also shared that he and his family successfully visited all 37 libraries and received their golden Library cards.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee
June 11, 2026

Present: Chair – Carima El-Behairy, Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek, members Sharon Kelly, and Elaine Panty. Also present were Deputy Director – Public Services 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

*Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci attended virtually.

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:03 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. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci shared that Assemblymember William Conrad is awarding an additional \$10,000 to four libraries, North Park Branch Library, Kenmore Branch Library, Kenilworth Branch Library, and the City of Tonawanda Public Library. Therefore, there will need to be a proposed resolution to accept these funds added onto the agenda for the Board meeting next week. The proposed resolution will be presented under Agenda Item K – New Business as resolution 2026-9 – Amend 2026 Budget: New York State Legislature Grant-in-Aid.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair El-Behairy stated that she will mention the Library's *Passport to Reading* program, and how exciting it has been for the Library. She emphasized that she only has one library left to visit before she receives her own golden Library card!

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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The Executive Committee received a list of the summer hours for all 37 libraries. This list will also be provided to the Board next week. The summer hours are effective June 15.

Chair El-Behairy continued reviewing the proposed agenda with the Executive Committee.

For the Report of the Director, Deputy Director – Public Services Darden stated that she will send a copy of the report electronically to the Executive Committee and will report out as usual during the Board meeting next week.

Library Administrative Manager Palicki shared that New York State approved the adopted budget. Discussion ensued regarding what information has been released so far pertaining to the budget. More information about the Library's allocation will be forthcoming. There was also discussion regarding changes to Tier 6 in New York State Retirement and how that affects the Library budget.

Deputy Director – Public Services Darden shared that the Library asked the New York State Library's Division of Library Development for an extension to submit the *Five Year Library System Plan of Service for 2027-2031* and *Central Library Plan 2027-31*. The Library was granted the extension with a new submission deadline of November 2, 2026. Deputy Director – Public Services Darden went on to note that a working group has been formed to work on the five-year plan and a meeting is scheduled for June 17, 2026 at the Central Library. This meeting will be hybrid.

Deputy Director – Public Services somberly shared that she attended the wake and funeral services of retired Assistant Deputy Director of the Department of Extension Services William A. Miles. She shared that he worked for the Library for 43 years and was a mentor to her. Trustee Panty and retired Deputy Director – Chief Financial Officer Ken Stone also attended the wake.

Chair El-Behairy asked if there can be an update on various construction projects occurring at libraries. For example, Kenilworth Branch Library will be closed until August for renovations.

There being no further business, Trustee Kelly motioned to adjourn and Vice Chair Sasiadek seconded. The meeting ended at 4:13 p.m.

Agenda Item E.2 – Budget and Finance Committee.

Agenda Item E.2.a – Monthly Financial Report. Library Administrative Manager Tracy Palicki summarized the Monthly Financial Report ending on April 30, 2026. Library Administrative Manager Palicki reported that 89% of the Library's revenue is in and that the Library is within budget. She also shared that New York State approved the adopted budget on May 28. Discussion ensued regarding the adopted budget, changes to Tier 6 retirement, and the continued monitoring of utilities. Further discussion ensued regarding the effect a status quo budget would have on the Library, and use of fund balance.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Deputy Director - Public Services Dorinda Darden began her report by sharing that Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz has appointed Dinorah Baines to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees. It is anticipated that the Erie County Legislature will confirm the appointment in early July. Dinorah is the Digital Information Officer for the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

Library Administration and key staff will present on the funding request for 2027 for \$9.5 million for the Central Library's *Various Improvements and Upgrades* including but not limited to air handler replacement, escalator repair, snowmelt system replacement, Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (MEP) upgrades, and other various upgrades, at the *Erie County Capital Projects Committee Meeting* on July 6.

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo awarded the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library a \$43,500 grant for teen-related leadership programming at the Central Library and the Aurora Town Public Library.

Buffalo Spree Magazine will be interviewing newly appointed Director Christine Schonhart in the next few weeks for a feature to run in its September issue.

The roof replacement begins this summer at the Central Library. The City of Buffalo has granted the contractor performing the work a permit to use the sidewalk and right of way (shoulder) on William Street alongside the Central Library building from June 19, 2026 through October 31, 2026. More than likely no street parking will be available on William Street during this time.

The Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library will be closed from June 22, 2026 through June 28, 2026 for renovations.

The Central Library is hosting its first ever *Love is Love Wedding Day at the Library* ceremony on Saturday, June 27 in the Auditorium. Officiants consisting of Library staff will marry couples. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci shared that she is an officiant during the 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. time slot.

Safety and security interactions at the Central Library and the Buffalo Branches over the last month have been what is typically expected, including occasional violations of Rules of Conduct handled by Security.

Lastly, Libraries are closed tomorrow for the Juneteenth holiday, however over the last week or so, staff participated in both outreach and onsite programs including the *6th Annual Juneteenth Celebration* at Canisius University on June 11.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report
May 2026**



Community Conversation - The 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition, for which the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is a founding member, hosted a *Community Conversation* event at the Buffalo History Museum on May 8. Attendees included 30+ east side community groups and individuals in support of reflecting on the history of systemic racism in Buffalo and the continued impact that the May 14, 2022 Buffalo Massacre at the Tops Supermarket on Jefferson Avenue has on the east side community. One of the meeting goals is to work together to preserve, educate, and build relationships that will help the community of survivors impacted by 5/14. The Library has completed 16 oral histories and over 1,000 materials were salvaged from the Tops site. Two thirds of those materials have been cleaned, preserved, and rehoused at the Buffalo History Museum Resource Center. Interim Director **Dorinda Darden**, Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino**, Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio**, Rare Book Curator **Heather Gring**, and Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** attended the event.

Maternal Mental Health Month - System Adult Outreach Services sponsored two events held at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library in celebration of *Maternal Mental Health Month*. The events presented by Founder of Our Mommie Village Shyana Broughton included *Navigating Maternal Mental Health: Community Strategies for Support and Healing*, and *Postpartum Village: Strengthening Family Wellness through Community Care* held on May 13 and May 20 respectively.

Passport to Reading - The *Passport to Reading* program runs from May 1 through August 21. This year, a special edition, limited Golden library card will be provided to the first 1,000 people who travel to all 37 Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations. Over 75 people have already completed the journey. Patrons and staff have expressed great enthusiasm about this very popular program, including positive social media postings.



Photos – Patrons at various libraries celebrating Passport to Reading

Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Librarian **Heather Bermingham** participated, for a second year, in Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) #97 Harvey Austin School's annual Career Day. **Heather** spoke to 95 children, in grades kindergarten through second grade, about public libraries and librarianship.

Central Adult Services, in conjunction with the WNY Armenian Society, hosted the program "*Total Effect: the Influence of Armenian Culture on World Civilization*," on May 30. There were both youth and adult presenters, with special graphics, music, videos, and Armenian pastries.

The **Central Teen Services Department** planned and hosted a canvas art program, on May 13, in anticipation of an increase of teens in the library due to a Buffalo Public Schools' early release day. A large number of teens participated in creating artwork on canvases. Some of the participants kept their art, but many chose to contribute their creations to a colorful display, which can be viewed in the Teen Space.

The Library Graphics team created signage for 12 libraries in May.

Books for Kids annual donation drive in partnership with Project Flight, Channel 2, Wegmans, The Buffalo News and Townsquare Media ran May 1-31 in all Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations. A live community donation drive took place on Friday, May 15 at Wegmans on Sheridan Drive featuring our Library 2GO van. **Joy Testa Cinquino** project managed and participated in a live news interview with Channel 2.

1. Programs and Outreach

Central Adult Services launched two new monthly programs in May: *A Graphic Novel Book Club* and an adult crafting group called, *Craft & Create*.

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*
- *Speculative Fiction Book Club*

- *Tea Blend Workshop*
- *Craft & Create*
- *Dungeons and Dragon drop-in group*
- *Graphic Novel Book Club*

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)

Central Library - Special Collections/Rare Book Room

- *Family History Conference* – Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library
- *Explore Buffalo Speaker Series - German Immigrants in Western New York* presented by Debra Hall-Stonish – Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library
- *Genealogy Training: Book a Librarian Genealogy Session, Western New York Genealogical Society Meeting & Programming* in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library, *Roots & Relax* – an online genealogy group
- *Tabling: 5/14 Day of Service & Remembrance* – Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*

Central Library – System Adult Outreach Services/ TechKnow Lab

- *Book a Librarian*
- *Book a Technology Trainer @ Brookdale Senior Living, Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library, Crane Branch Library*
- *Notary Service*
- *Decode the Noise: Information Literacy* – Westminster Community House
- *Technology Training: Canva* - North Collins Public Library
- *University Express Technology Classes: Facebook Safety and Security* -Cheektowaga Senior Center, Orchard Park Senior Center, *Intro to AI* - Hamburg Senior Center, Clarence Senior Center, Westminster Community House, Town of Tonawanda Senior Center, Eden Library, *Using Google* - Concord Senior Center, *Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on Mobile Devices* - Dorothy J. Collier Community Center
- *University Express Lecture: Death and Dying: Goodbye, I Love You* presented by Dr. Thomas Rosenthal - Central Library
- *Tabling: World's Largest Yard Sale* at the Fairgrounds in Hamburg, *Groundwork Market Garden Plant Sale* in Buffalo, *Pathways to Progress Re-entry Fair* sponsored by Community Access Services in Buffalo, *Senior Social* at the Delavan-Grider Community Center in Buffalo sponsored by Erie County Legislator Taisha St. Jean Tard, *Job Fair* sponsored by the New York State Department of Labor and New York State Assemblymember Karen McMahon at the Northwest Community Center in Amherst, *2nd Annual Mental Health and Wellness Fair* sponsored by the Buffalo Public Schools Adult Education Division
- *Maternal Health & Wellness Expo* presented by Catholic Health - Central Library

- Virtual Presentation: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's *Small Business Resources* presented for the Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI) Entrepreneurship Assistance Center Spring Training Series
- *Clothing Giveaway* presented by Amazing Women's Outreach Inc. – Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library
- *Wellness @ Central*
- *Job Fair* sponsored by the New York State Department of Library – Central Library
- *Shop For Free* sponsored by UB HEALS (Homeless Health, Education, Awareness and Leadership in Street medicine) – Central Library

Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services

- *Tabling: GLYS WNY Conference*
- *Media Literacy Book Talk* – GLYS WNY
- *Tabling: Saturday Academy* –BPS #99 Stanley M. Makowski Early Childhood Center

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:

- Library on Wheels Bookmobile: *2nd Annual Pollinator Festival* in South Wales, NY presented by Erie County Parks, Recreation & Forestry in partnership with Buffalo Women of Environmental Learning and Leadership (BWELL)
- Library on Wheels Bookmobile: *Health & Wellness Fair* - Buffalo Academy of Science Charter School, BPS #302 Emerson School of Hospitality
- Library on Wheels Bookmobile: Town of Tonawanda Public Library – Kenilworth Branch

City Branch Libraries

All Branches:

- *Take n' Make craft bags and scavenger hunts* (Themes: Team Mascots, Parrots, Sunflowers, Mother's Day Bouquet, Star Wars characters, umbrella emotional wheels, Flowers/Gardening, Breathing Wand, Bicycles, Butterflies, Local Wildlife, Yarn Jellyfish, Floating Foam Hippos, Fry Waving Seas Gulls)

Multiple Branches:

- *Chess*
- *Storytime*
- *Board game and video gaming groups*
- *Adult Book Groups by theme: General fiction, Mystery, Nature, Tea & Books and Romance & Rants, Dudley Detectives*
- *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, Central Teens, Leroy R. Coles, Jr.)
- *Free Legal Services*
- *Erie-Niagara Conservatory of Music Storytime: Tune the Tale Take your Child to the Library Day Activities*

- *Stay and Play for preschoolers*

Individual Branches:

- *Star Wars Trivia Night* (Crane)
- *Candy Bar Bingo* (Dudley)
- *Adult Craft Night – Pressed Flower Tea Light Jars* (North Park)
- *University Express – The History of Mystery with Local Author Harriet Grayson* (North Park)
- *Craft Café Junk Journaling Club* (Isaías González-Soto)
- *Collecting Family Oral Histories with Kelly Elaine Navies, Museum Specialist in Oral History at Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *Community Bridge Resource Fair coordinated by Social Work Intern* (Leroy R. Coles, Jr.)

Outreach:

- *Lighthouse Center preschool visit* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *BPS #37 Marva J. Daniel Futures Preparatory School* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *Multicultural Night and Saturday Academy at B.U.I.L.D Academy* (Leroy R. Coles, Jr.)
- *West Side Community Services Art Bash* (Isaías González-Soto)
- *BPS #97 Harvey Austin School’s Annual Career Day* (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)
- *BPS #82 Roosevelt Elementary Wellness Fair* (Elaine M. Panty)

Tours and Visits:

- Two classes of second grade students visited the Children’s Room at the Central Library from Elmwood Village Charter School on May 1.
- Students from Cattaraugus County visited the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library on May 1 to conduct research on the history of Kinzua Dam, the town of Ellicottville and other local histories.
- Three classes of second grade students visited the library from Highland Elementary visited the Children’s Room at the Central Library on May 8.
- Students from Buffalo State University’s Patricia H. and Richard E. Garman Art Conservation Department visited the Grosvenor Room at the Central Library on May 11 to present their departmental conservation reports, offering suggestions for long-term storage solutions and environmental conditions to best maintain Special Collections materials.
- BPS #32 Bennett Park Montessori visited the Children’s Room at the Central Library on May 12 and May 27.
- A Buffalo Women in Business group was provided a tour of the Rare Book Room on May 20.
- On May 22, students from Saint Francis High School in Hamburg received assistance with research, were provided a tour of Special Collections exhibited spaces, and closed stacks.
- The monthly Special Collections tour of the Grosvenor Room, Rare Book Room, and the Mark Twain Room was provided to patrons on May 23.
- Rainbow House Community School visited the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., Branch Library.

Displays and Exhibits:

- *Friends of Night People Conversations in Carolingian Style Illuminated Manuscript Exhibit* from local artist Rosemary Lyons (on view now through August 1.) (Isaías González-Soto)

2. Collection Development

Physical Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,205	12,656	187	1,445	506,435
Young Adult Print	367	2,089	40	435	68,181
Adult Print	3,620	16,346	634	3,471	1,750,625
Media	2,481	9,447	263	1,146	502,817
Other*	1,488	8,026	169	290	170,084
Subtotal	10,161	48,564	1,293	6,787	2,998,142

*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

Electronic Collections*:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	5,651	25,256	1,314	7,246	134,246
eAudiobooks	7,899	43,454	408	2,100	64,410
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,651
Subtotal	13,550	68,710	1,722	9,346	205,307

All Collections:

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Total	23,711	117,274	3,015	16,133	3,203,449

Rare Book and Special Collections:

The Buffalo Composers Manuscript Collection in the closed stacks is being reevaluated and card indexed for composers, as well as finding aids are being created.

3. Fundraising

Fundraising:

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal	January 1 - May 31, 2026	\$80,825

Highlights:

A \$5,000 Summer Reading sponsorship was approved by the NY's 529 College fund. The money will be used to advertise Summer Reading. The request was written and submitted by **Joy Testa Cinquino**.

A \$43,500 grant for Teen Advisory Group (TAG) programs at the Central Library and the Aurora Town Public Library has been approved with the funds coming through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

4. Facilities

On May 6, Library Facilities staff assisted with an on-site meeting at the Angola Public Library to discuss a possible NYS Library Construction Aid Project application. Elements of the project centered around renovation of the staff and public restrooms, expansion of the book sale room, and relocation of a main wall separating the public and non-public areas.

On May 8, Central Library Maintenance and Library Facilities staff met with Erie County Department of Public Works (DPW) to review the installation of several doors and hinges related to the Egress Project. Several hinges were discovered to be installed incorrectly. The contractor will reach out to the manufacturer to discuss possible warranty related options. The timeline to resolve this issue is currently to be determined.

On May 20, a progress meeting was held at the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library for the HVAC & Controls Repair Project. This project will rebuild the existing air handler, install a new condenser and AC coils, install new pumps, and upgrade Siemens Control systems. The project is still on schedule, with the Library shut down currently scheduled for June 22-26.

On May 21, Bostwick Design Partnership held a virtual meeting to review the status of their *Space Utilization Study* estimate. The phase-by-phase estimate was prepared by Trophy Point, adjusted to include hazmat and escalation to reach a proposed all-in per phase construction estimate. The current estimate tracks just north of \$100 million for all phases over a roughly 20 years' timeline.

On May 29, Erie County DPW held a status meeting with Jameson Roofing and Library staff for the Central Library Roof Replacement & Green Roof Project. Construction is expected to begin on the roof at the end of June/ beginning of July. Jameson wanted to begin construction in early June, but submittals are taking longer than expected. Due to this schedule change, the green roof and irrigation portion of the project will likely not begin until Spring 2027. Other topics of discussion included status of submittals for insulation and leak detection, changes to the scope of work including removal of the solar scope, layout of fall protection lines, hazardous material air monitoring, and weekly meeting schedule.

5. Staff Development

Youth Services Group Spring Meeting – Twenty-six staff members from throughout the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System participated in the in-person *Youth Services Group Spring Meeting* on May 19 at the Grand Island Memorial Library. This half-day event arranged by System Youth Outreach Services staff included presentations on *Your Children's Collection: Who Does What and Why?* (presented by Collection Development Librarian **Michelle Snyder** and Technical Services Librarian **Kerra Alessi**); *We the People: A Quilt of Belonging* (presented by **Susan Buttaccio** and Community Engagement

Manager **Hannah Quaintance**); *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten* (presented by Kelly Menzel, North Tonawanda Public Library); and *Literacy Plan, Summer Stats, and Updates* (presented by System Youth Outreach Services Manager **Chelsey Lonberger**); as well as a collaborative summer programming brainstorming session facilitated by Special Projects Coordinator **Erin Vest**. Attendees also had opportunities to network with their peers and collect a variety of materials and resources to bring back to their libraries.

Minimum Standards for Libraries Webinar Series – In response to recently announced updates to Minimum Standards for public and association libraries, the New York State Library has begun offering a series of webinars focusing on how to plan for the new standards. Eleven managers and directors attended the May offerings, which included *Overview and New Additions; Internal Library Policies Related to Personnel, Disaster Preparedness, and Financial Controls; and Confidentiality of Library Records*.

Additional Webinars – Employees participated in a variety of other webinars and online learning programs in May, with several staff members attending these sessions: *Building Joy-Centric Libraries* (from Library Speakers Consortium), *Information Literacy in the Era of Google AI Overviews and ChatGPT* (from Library Journal), *Library Accessibility 101: Because People with Disabilities Need Libraries* (from NYS Library), and *Navigating Misinformation in One-on-One Patron Interactions* (from OCLC/WebJunction).

6. Communications

Media Coverage

In May, the Library had significant press coverage across a number of topics.

- Christine Schonhart Appointed Director
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library’s Board of Trustees announced the appointment of Christine Schonhart as Library Director, effective August 2026. Coverage is included below.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Press Release	Library Announces Christine Schonhart Appointed Director	Press Release: Library Board Of Trustees Appoints Christine Schonhart As Next Director Of Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (5/21)
Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director	Buffalo Rising: Coming Home: Christine Schonhart Appointed Director of Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (5/21)
Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director	Buffalo News: Western New York native named new director of library system (5/21)
Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director	Buffalo Business First: Buffalo & Erie County Library Names New Director (5/22)

Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director – Interview with Carima El-Behairy	WIVB: Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Announces New Director (5/22)
Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director – Interview with Carima El-Behairy	WIVB (video): Interview: New Director for Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (5/22)
Earned Media	Christine Schonhart Appointed Director	Bee Group Newspapers: Christine Schonhart: Next Director of Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (5/27)

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library’s *Passport to Reading* summer program launched – challenging cardholders to visit all 37 branches across Erie County, with the first 1,000 to complete visits to all libraries earning a limited-edition golden library card. The program is open to all, and runs through the summer.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Press Release	Passport to Reading Launch	Release: GOING FOR GOLD: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Announces Passport to Reading, Offering Limited Edition Golden Library Cards to the First 1,000 Winners (5/1)
Earned Media	Passport to Reading	WGRZ: Passport to Reading Drive Awarding Golden Library Cards to First Thousand Victors (5/3)
Earned Media	Passport to Reading	Bee Group Newspapers: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Offering ‘Gold Card’ Incentive in Summer Reading Program (5/6)
Earned Media	Passport to Reading	WKBW: Passport to Reading Challenge Turns Summer Into a Library Adventure Across Erie County (5/6)

Central Library + University at Buffalo (UB)

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and UB have launched “Pathways to Stability,” a pilot program placing UB social work and public health graduate students in the Central Library to support those facing housing insecurity. Assistant Deputy Director **Maria Lowe** spoke to *The Buffalo News* on the initiative.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
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Earned Media	Central Library + UB Partnership	Buffalo News: Librarians Downtown Enlist UB Social Work Students to Help Serve Homeless Patrons (5/27)
Press Release	Central Library + UB Partnership	University at Buffalo Press Release: UB Project Connects Vulnerable Populations to Resources (5/27)

Social Media:

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	46	212	5,042	20,533	174	16,698
Flickr	-	-	3,911	10,998	-	59
Google Ads ¹	N/A	N/A	2,454	12,536	N/A	N/A
Instagram	15	69	13,304	53,664	303	10,755
Pinterest	2	7	38	169	-2	2,047
Twitter (X)	33	166	101	290	11	10,336
Bluesky	13	63	43	240	9	1,327
YouTube	11	31	97	1,947	3	905
TikTok	-	3	469	3,993	4	1,093
Total	120	551	25,459	104,370	502	43,220

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:

- **Buffalo Autism Project**
- **Buffalo Place, Inc.**
- **Buffalo Toronto Public Media**
- **Buffalo Zoo**
- **Children’s Centers in the Courts**
- **Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo**
- **East Aurora High School**
- **Erie County 250 Steering Committee**
- **Erie County Department of Health**
- **Erie County Historical Commission**
- **Erie County Youth Board**
- **Erie 1 Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)**
- **Every Person Influences Children (EPIC)**
- **FSH Technologies**
- **Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo**
- **Live Well Erie**

- New York Library Association (NYLA) LAMS (Leadership and Management Section)
- North Tonawanda Public Library
- Onondaga County Public Libraries
- School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin
- State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) Departments
- West Seneca Central School District
- Western New York (WNY) Digital Equity Coalition
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees

8. Director Activities

List of Meetings and Events

Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden

May 2026

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
May 1, 2026	Webinar - Know Your Rights with the New York Immigration Coalition, Part Two: Library FAQs
May 1, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Erie County Virtual Court Access Network (VCAN) Update & Ribbon Cutting Meeting
May 4, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
May 4, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
May 4, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
May 5, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
May 5, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
May 5, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
May 6, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
May 6, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio, Jennifer Childs, Carol Kowalik-Happy, Chelsey Lonberger, Andrew Maines, Linda Rizzo
May 6, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
May 7, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
May 7, 2026	Panel Interviewer - Development Manager Position
May 7, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
May 8, 2026	Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Community Conversation at the Buffalo History Museum
May 8, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
May 11, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
May 11, 2026	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Steering Committee
May 11, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team

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May 11, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
May 12, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
May 12, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
May 12, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
May 12, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO)
May 13, 2026	Meeting - Managers/Directors
May 13, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
May 13, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
May 13, 2026	Event - Dedication of the Richard Earne Reading Garden at Grand Island Memorial Library
May 14, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
May 14, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
May 14, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Executive Committee
May 15, 2026	Meeting - Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Board of Trustees and WNYLRC Committees at Hilbert College
May 16, 2026	Meeting - Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) at Town of Collins Public Library
May 18, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
May 18, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
May 18, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
May 19, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
May 19, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
May 19, 2026	Virtual Meeting - ErieNet Local Development Corporation Board of Directors
May 21, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
May 21, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
May 21, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Chair Carima El-Beahry and Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek
May 21, 2026	Virtual Meeting - American Library Association (ALA) Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA)
May 21, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Bostwick Design Partnership
May 21, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System (PLS) Directors
May 21, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees
May 22, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
May 22, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
May 26, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci

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May 26, 2026	Meeting - Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Board of Trustees
May 27, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
May 27, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
May 27, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
May 28, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
May 28, 2026	Webinar - Minimum Standards for Libraries - Internal Library Policies Related to Personnel, Disaster Preparedness, and Financial Controls
May 28, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
May 29, 2026	Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Shared Stewardship Work Session 2
May 29, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Friends Council
May 29, 2026	Wake for retired Assistant Deputy Director of the Department of Extension Services, William A. Miles
May 30, 2026	Viewing and Funeral Services for retired Assistant Deputy Director of the Department of Extension Services, William A. Miles

Appendices
A. Monthly Statistics

System Programming Statistics:

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Regular*				
Adults	1807	7835	5220	20803
Children 5 and under	953	5815	5388	29040
Children 6-11	3497	17887	5502	29830
Intergenerational/Combined	3887	24412	10778	48426
Teens	381	1684	658	3551
Regular Total	10525	57633	27546	131650
Regular Total	10525	57633	27546	131650
Virtual				
Live Virtual				
Adults	2	39	41	355
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	0	0	0	0
Intergenerational/Combined	3	34	34	377
Teens	0	42	0	42
Live Virtual Total	5	115	75	774
Recorded Virtual				
Adults	5	21	30	626
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	10	354	2427
Intergenerational/Combined	10	40	2480	10013
Teens	0	0	0	0
Recorded Virtual Total	17	71	2864	13066
Virtual Total	22	186	2939	13840
Grand Total	10547	57819	30485	145490

*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

Orchard Park Public Library – submitted by Tom Carloni, Director

Job Fair – In collaboration with the NYS Department of Labor and Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce, the library once again hosted a very popular job fair this past May with over 30 potential employers. Drawing 120 attendees, this event brought many new faces to the library, which we were more than excited to welcome and showcase our vast array of services with.

Art Splash! Opening Reception – Another fantastic annual tradition at the library is the Opening Reception and three week long show for the Orchard Park Central School District's Art Splash!, showcasing student work from grades pre-k to 12. The Opening Reception alone drew over 450 patrons, the largest turnout yet!

Train Day – On May 9, the library celebrated Train Day in collaboration with the Orchard Park Train Depot. Librarian **Kasey Mack** led a multi-stationed event between several library, outdoor and Train Depot spaces. This collaborative effort drew over 200 happy patrons.

Dare to Repair Cafe – Another excellent collaboration in May was with the Tool Library of Buffalo who brought a 3-hour workshop working with individual patrons to fix a multitude of household items. Almost all of the 180 patrons successfully repaired their items, saving both money and space in landfills.

Baby, Toddler and Preschool Storytimes – Librarians **Kasey Mack, Mary Laughlin** and **Sam Adelman** team up to offer custom tailored programs 5-6 times a week to full capacity crowds. Both children and caregivers leave delighted at the end of each session and our Independent Preschool Storytime sessions prepare 3 - 5-year-olds for their first big school year.

Seed Lenders' Series & Gardens – Coordinated with Librarian Trainee **Tim Allman**, the Orchard Park Garden Club's Seedlings group continues to present a monthly lecture series on all topics gardening. In addition to these fascinating lectures, the Seedlings provide **Tim** with assistance managing our ongoing Seed Library and the annual Spring Plant Swap. The Seedlings have also been hard at work maintaining two beautiful

additions to our library grounds, a vibrant pollinator garden and a unique literary garden. The pollinator garden is designed to attract bees, butterflies, and other essential pollinators, supporting local ecology. The literary garden blends nature and literature by featuring plants inspired by classic books, along with signs showcasing quotes and stories tied to the natural world.

Saturday Morning Play at the Library – Librarian **Kasey Mack** has created an innovative, drop-in style program one Saturday each month featuring several sensory play stations geared toward children ages 2-7. All who attend have so much messy and not-so-messy fun.

Spice of the Month Club – Another new and innovative program designed by librarian **Mary Laughlin** is our Spice of the Month Club. This passive program is a display featuring a sample of one unique spice each month, along with a tri-fold pamphlet featuring information about that spice and some recipes to try. Come in and get a sample each month while supplies last!

One-on-One Tech Training – Librarian Trainee **Tim Allman** provides patrons with one-hour appointments for custom, individualized technology training on a wide array of topics. These offerings have become quite popular, and we average about 5-6 appointments a month.

Class Visits – Spring is a great time of year for local schools and community groups to book class visits to the library. Wednesday mornings, while the library is closed, tend to be an ideal time to let school age children wander and explore all that the library has to offer. Librarians **Kasey Mack**, **Mary Laughlin** and **Sam Adelman** have combined to host about a dozen visits this spring alone.

Community Group Use – In addition the superb programs we offer to patrons of all ages and backgrounds, the library also sees a very high demand from a variety of community groups looking to use our spaces for public events.

Upcoming Programs include:

Great Train Race – On June 13, the library will kick-off our summer festivities with an amazing, town-wide collaboration and first ever Great Train Race! In partnership with the Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce, Orchard Park Recreation Department, Orchard Park Police D.A.R.E. program, Orchard Park Central School's Physical Education Dept., the Orchard Park Train Depot, Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail and the wonderful, Friends of the Orchard Park Public Library, children from pre-K to 7th grade will be here for a fun run and healthy kickoff to summer. Special thanks to the Friends for booking a massive inflatable obstacle course and giant slide.

Music in the Library – Back by popular demand, Librarian **Allie Dotegowski** will host our second Music in the Library showcase of local musical talent. Our winter presentation was very well received, and we can only expect to grow this fantastic event with even more space outside.

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 she also completed her visits to all 37 libraries and received her golden Library card. She stated that it was an exciting program and led her to experience how unique each library is. Martha Buyer reported that the next ACT meeting will be held at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library. The date is yet to be determined.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Trustee Craik reported that he went to the Eden Library. He said that the library staff are thrilled with the traffic they have been receiving due to the *Passport to Reading* program. He went on to say that the library staff are active with youth programming and have been doing outreach at schools. It has been helpful with their circulation of materials because children can checkout library materials for longer, and they are fine free.

He wanted to highlight Clerk Typist Samantha Wilson who has done a tremendous job for the Eden Library in terms of displays, and book displays for the youth in particular.

Chair El-Behairy shared that she went to the Angola Public Library. The Angola Public Library held a program related to the Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 steam locomotive. The library was used as a location for patrons to gather and view the locomotive as it came through the area. Chair El-Behairy also shared that the Angola Public Library held their *Annual Hot Dog Fundraiser* on June 6.

Trustee Bartholomew wanted to give a shout out to the Clearfield Branch Library for stepping into action to help her rescue her family dog. The library staff went above and beyond to ensure her dog was safely returned to her home.

Trustee Craik also wanted to thank Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci for her assistance with answering a question pertaining to the *Library of Things* for the Eden Library. She answered expeditiously and was extraordinarily professional.

Agenda Item I – Public Comment. None.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business. None.

Agenda Item K – New Business.

Agenda Item K.1 – Resolution 2026-8 – Authorize Chair to Execute 2026 Contracts with Contracting Libraries. Library Administrative Manager Palicki summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-8

WHEREAS, budgetary allocations from Erie County and New York State to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (the "Library") constitute the vast majority of the financial resources supporting the contract with the "Public Library," and

WHEREAS, Erie County's 2026 allocation was not known until early December, and New York State's overall allocation was adopted on May 28, 2026, and

WHEREAS, this made it difficult for the Library and the contracting libraries to develop, consider, and approve a contract prior to the beginning of the 2026 fiscal year on January 1, 2026, and

WHEREAS, to meet 2026 operating expenditure needs of the contracting libraries, the Library Board of Trustees implemented the automatic extension provision contained in the 2025 contract until such time as a final 2026 contract is adopted, not to exceed July 31, 2026, whichever was earlier, with budgetary amounts based upon the 2026 Board adopted budget and any subsequent modifications thereof, and

WHEREAS, Erie County's 2026 budget is now in place and the New York State budget has been adopted, and

WHEREAS, the impact of these changes is now known, allowing necessary budget adjustments to be made, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library authorizes the Chair of the Board of Trustees to execute 2026 contracts subject to the terms and conditions noted above and with budget figures reflecting the 2026 Board-adopted budget as amended.

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

Agenda Item K.2 – Resolution 2026-9 – Amend 2026 Budget: New York State Legislature Grant-in-Aid. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-9

WHEREAS, on June 9, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (Library) received notification of \$40,000 in grants-in-aid approved by the New York State Legislature for designated libraries, and

WHEREAS, this special aid was sponsored by New York State Assembly Member William Conrad (District 140), and

WHEREAS, private and public grants are regularly sought to augment library equipment, materials, programs, and other needs, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library gratefully accepts the award of \$40,000 in State Aid, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Library will encourage the receiving libraries to utilize these funds for purposes consistent with the sponsor’s designation, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library approves amending the 2026 Operating Budget, increasing revenue and expense as follows:

2026 Operating Budget		SAP Commitment Item #	
Revenue and Expense Increase		Revenue #408160	Expense # 516010
		State Aid - Special	Contractual Payments
District/Library	Cost Center	Amount	Amount
Town of Tonawanda Public Library	4205540	\$20,000	\$20,000
City of Tonawanda Public Library	4204080	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Contract Libraries		\$30,000	\$30,000
		Revenue #408160	Expense # 530000
		State Aid - Special	Other Expense
District/Library	Cost Center	Amount	Amount
Dist. 140 North Park Branch	4203370	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Buffalo/System		\$10,000	\$10,000

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees authorizes the Library and the above contracting libraries to retain these funds until such time as they can be used for purposes consistent with any sponsor designation, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the above libraries are authorized to transfer these funds to other expense accounts within their budget based upon the final determined use.

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

Walk-On – Resolution 2026-10 – Accept & Budget Grant Award – America 250 Programming Fund. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-10

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (the “Library”) received notification of the “We the People” grant awards from the Erie County America 250 Programming Fund administered by Visit Buffalo, and

WHEREAS, this funding is intended to encourage residents and visitors to celebrate America’s 250th Anniversary in Erie County, and

WHEREAS, a grant budget needs to be established to undertake the program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library gratefully accepts the award and authorizes amending the 2026 Grants Budget by appropriating grant revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$15,275 to establish the *America 250 Programming Fund* grant, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library approves utilizing these funds for the “Quilt of Belonging” and “Exploration of the History and Significance of Herbal Art and Teas in MENA Culture” programming activities, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library authorizes establishing the *America 250 Programming Fund* grant budget in the following amounts:

Grant Project Revenue:	\$15,275
Grant Project Expenditures:	\$15,275 and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the Library Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer or designee is authorized to execute the necessary forms and documents to implement this grant.

Discussion ensued regarding where the programs will be held. The “Quilt of Belonging” program has already begun taking place at various libraries.

Trustee Johnson made the motion to approve. Trustee Berens Bucki seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item L – Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Bedenko with a second by Trustee Panty, the meeting was adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew
Secretary