

PROPOSED  
MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
March 19, 2026

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library was held on Thursday, March 19, 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  
Nathaniel W. Barnes  
Alan J. Bedenko, Esq.  
Kathleen Berens Bucki, MLS  
Adam Bojak, Esq.  
Kimberly Johnson  
Theodore K. Johnson  
Sharon M. Kelly, Esq.  
Joel C. Moore, Esq.  
Elaine M. Panty

Chair El-Behairy called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

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

Agenda Item C – Minutes of the Meeting of January 15, 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 shared that she attended the Auditorium Dedication Ceremony in honor of Dr. Tamara Alsace hosted by the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York held on Saturday, March 7 at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library. She stated that the event was well received and heartfelt.

Chair El-Behairy went on to ask for a moment of silence for former Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustee Phyllis A. Horton who recently passed away. Trustee Panty said a few words about Phyllis A. Horton. She shared how invaluable Phyllis was on the Library Board of Trustees. Trustee Panty also shared how dedicated she was to the Library.

Moving through her report, Chair El-Behairy shared a letter she received requesting the Library purchase video games for patrons to borrow. She stated that the Library is exploring options. Discussion ensued regarding the request.

Agenda Item D.1 – Committee Appointments. There were no new nominations for committees from the floor. On a motion by Trustee Panty, seconded by Trustee Bedenko, committees were closed, and the committees and their members shared below were unanimously approved as presented. Chair El-Behairy announced that the Budget and Finance Committee would be meeting immediately following the Board meeting.

**Buffalo & Erie County Public Library - Board of Trustees 2026 Committees**

**COMMITTEES**

**Executive**

Carima El-Behairy, Chair  
Christopher Sasiadek, Vice Chair  
Kimberly Johnson  
Sharon Kelly  
Elaine Panty

**Building Oversight 3-5 members**

Adam Bojak  
Kathleen Berens Bucki  
Kimberly Johnson  
Ted Johnson  
Elaine Panty

**Ex-Officio**

W. Lawrence Buck  
Kathleen Berens Bucki  
Jack Connors  
Ted Johnson  
Salvatore Martoche  
Rebecca Pordum

**Governance 3-5 members**

Alan Bedenko, Chair  
Christine Bartholomew  
John Craik  
Carima El-Behairy  
Sharon Kelly

**Budget & Finance 3-5 members**

John Craik, Chair  
Nathaniel Barnes  
Alan Bedenko  
Carima El-Behairy  
Kimberly Johnson

**Policy 3-5 members**

Elaine Panty, Chair  
Christine Bartholomew  
Alan Bedenko  
Adam Bojak  
John Craik

**OTHER COMMITTEES**

**Buffalo Library Services**

Kimberly Johnson

Elaine Panty

**Planning**

John Craik

Elaine Panty

**Development & Advocacy**

Sharon Kelly, Chair

Carima El-Behairy

Kimberly Johnson

Elaine Panty

**Special Collections**

Kimberly Johnson

Elaine Panty

Agenda Item E – Committee Reports.

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

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee  
February 12, 2026

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

Excused: Vice Chair Christopher Sasiadek and member Kimberly Johnson

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. She asked if there would be any changes to the draft agenda. Library Administrative Manager Palicki stated that she would have copies of the Monthly Financial Report ending on December 31, 2025 at the meeting. Interim Director Darden stated that there was a Library Foundation meeting on January 22. The Executive Committee agreed to add Agenda Item – Report of the Foundation to the proposed agenda.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair El-Behairy stated that she would discuss Committee Assignments for 2026 and Contracting Library Liaisons.

For the Report of the Director, Interim Director Darden shared that she attended New York Library Association's (NYLA) Pre-Advocacy Day program sessions and Library Advocacy Day on February 2 and 3 in Albany. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Directors Joy Testa Cinquino and Maria Lowe, Elma Public Library Director Stephanie Molnar, Grand Island Memorial Library Director Bridgette Heintz, Newstead Public Library Director Kristine Sutton, Hamburg Public Library

Librarian/Manager Nicole Brown, and Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Member Kimberly Johnson also attended Library Advocacy Day.

The group met with New York State Senator Patrick Gallivan, New York State Assembly Members Paul Bologna, Angelo Morinello, William Conrad, Patrick Chludzinski, Karen McMahon, as well as representatives from the offices of Assembly Members Crystal Peoples-Stokes and Jonathan Rivera. In addition, Assistant Deputy Director Testa Cinquino and Interim Director Darden met virtually with Senator April Baskin's office on February 5. The State Legislators are supportive of libraries throughout New York State and expressed their commitment to advocate for the increase in state funding for Fiscal Year 2027 and legislative priorities for 2026 proposed by the New York Library Association (NYLA) that we presented to them. Subsequently, Interim Director Darden received a letter from Senator Gallivan that was circulated to State Legislative Leaders in support of an increase in funding for Libraries in Governor Kathy Hochul's FY 2027 enacted budget.

The Library has received complaints from patrons about the North Park Branch Library's parking area not being snowplowed in a timely manner. Supervisor of Building Operations & Maintenance Mark Kross has been in contact with the landlord to address this issue. In addition, Supervisor of Building Operations & Maintenance Kross was notified on February 3 that a pipe had burst in the facility housing the North Park Branch Library, resulting in water damage. Water seeped into the library's top level and meeting room carpet, as well as a small portion of the carpet on the lower level. Due to the water, the library was closed from February 3 through February 10. The landlord hired a company specializing in water damage restoration to remove the water and followed the extraction with drying equipment and dehumidifiers. After this was completed, it was detected that there was remaining moisture in the wall of the meeting room. The facility's landlord hired a company to cut into the drywall and remove the affected insulation. The landlord will proceed with replacing the insulation and drywall. The meeting room will be closed until the insulation and drywall is replaced.

Interim Director Darden plans to write a letter to Mayor Sean Ryan about a permanent building for the North Park Branch Library, which has been at this temporary location since 2009. Chair El-Behairy asked when the lease expires. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated 2032. Further discussion ensued regarding the North Park Branch Library and the lack of libraries in the East Side of Buffalo.

At next week's Board Meeting, Interim Director stated that she would provide an update on the Central Library Space Utilization Study as well as meetings and events that she attended.

Chair El-Behairy continued to review the proposed agenda for the Library Board's meeting on February 19. Discussion ensued regarding the proposed resolutions and the Central Library's roof construction project.

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There being no further business, Trustee Kelly motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Panty seconded. The meeting ended at 4:26 p.m.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Executive Committee  
March 12, 2026

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

The meeting of the Executive Committee began at 4:00 p.m. After a call of the roll, it was noted that a quorum was present.

Chair El-Beairy began the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda. It was noted that proposed Resolution 2026-3 – Amend Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy and proposed Resolution 2025-4 – Amend Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy should move under Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business back to the original proposed resolution numbers 2025-45 and 2025-49. Proposed Resolution 2026-5 – Accept & Budget Grant Award – Love Your Library’s resolution number will change to 2026-3. The Executive Committee agreed to these changes of the proposed agenda.

For the Report of the Chair, Chair El-Beairy stated that she would discuss Committee Assignments for 2026. Chair El-Beairy also stated that she would report on the Auditorium Dedication Ceremony in honor of Dr. Tamara Alsace hosted by the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York that was held on Saturday, March 7. She also shared that she will remind the Board of the annual ACT Trustee Workshop scheduled for Saturday, March 21. Chair El-Beairy explained that attending the ACT Trustee Workshop would satisfy the annual Trustee Education requirement for 2026.

For those that cannot attend, or in addition to attending the ACT Trustee Workshop, Chair El-Beairy stated that a virtual session of the Trustee Handbook Book Club would be streamed after the April Board of Trustees meeting.

Chair El-Beairy continued through the proposed agenda. Library Administrative Manager Palicki stated that she would present the updated 2025 financials. Discussion ensued regarding the 2025 budget. Further discussion ensued regarding the Budget and Finance Committee and scheduling a meeting.

For the Report of the Director, Interim Director Darden reported that with deep sadness, the Library has learned of the passing of former Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Trustee Phyllis A. Horton. Interim Director Darden stated that as more information becomes available, it will be shared with staff and trustees.

Interim Director shared that the new eleventh edition of the Intellectual Freedom Manual compiled by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association (ALA) pays tribute to the late Director John Spears on their dedication page. Copies of the page will be available at the Board Meeting on March 19. Member Kelly read aloud the dedication below.

“For John Spears, whose unwavering belief in intellectual freedom shaped this work. His passion for amplifying every voice and ensuring access for all is reflected in these pages.”

Assistant Deputy Director Joy Testa Cinquino and Interim Director Darden attended Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) Adult Education Partner Breakfast at BPS #355 Buffalo School of Culinary Arts & Hospitality Management on March 5. During the program, Interim Director Darden had the opportunity to introduce herself to BPS Superintendent Dr. Pascal Mubenga.

Interim Director Darden attended the Auditorium Dedication Ceremony in honor of Dr. Tamara Alsace hosted by the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York on March 7 at the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library. She stated that it was a very touching and fun event.

Interim Director Darden was pleased to announce that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library’s Profoundly Public marketing campaign won a silver ADDY award as part of the American Advertising Awards. She stated that this is a very prestigious award among marketers, advertising agencies, and artists. This was the first year the Library entered, and she stated that it feels good to see the Library’s hard work recognized – including library billboards, radio commercials, website - all created in-house. She commended Marketing Manager Sean Piazza, Library Display Artist Dawn Stanton, and the Development & Communications staff for their great work on this successful campaign.

Next week, Interim Director Darden will provide an update on the Central Library Space Utilization Study, provide an overview of programming for America’s 250th Anniversary, and talk about the creation of the John Spears Oral History Project.

Lastly, she reminded the Executive Committee that the Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT) Annual Workshop will be at the Central Library on Saturday, March 21. Registration is due Friday, March 13. The cost is \$15 per person and includes morning refreshments, program, and lunch.

Chair El-Behairy continued to review the proposed agenda for the Library Board’s meeting on March 19. Discussion ensued regarding contracting library liaisons.

There being no further business, Trustee Panty motioned to adjourn, and Trustee Johnson seconded. The meeting ended at 4:21 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 December 31, 2025. Discussion ensued regarding interest rate earnings, personnel costs, retirement, and health insurance. Discussion continued regarding utilities and fund balance. Library Administrative Manager Palicki reported that the Library only had to use \$82,719 of the fund balance rather than the originally budgeted amount of \$839,804.

Trustee Panty asked about the potential changes to Tier 6 retirement and whether it will affect the Library. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Angela Marinucci stated that she has been tracking that news, and that currently Tier 6 is the lowest percentage that the Library pays towards retirement. She has not seen a proposal for changes yet; if changes are proposed to contribution rates, then the retirement rates will increase going forward.

Further discussion ensued regarding retirement rates.

Trustee Sasiadek asked what “fine revenue” refers to in the Monthly Financial Report since the Library is fine free. Library Administrative Manager Palicki stated that moving forward it should read “fee revenue.” She went on to explain what fee revenue refers to in the Monthly Financial Report.

Trustee Joel Moore arrived at 4:07 p.m.

Agenda Item E.3 – Search Committee. Chair El-Behairy reported that the Search Committee met on January 27, 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 27, 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) President Martha Buyer. Also present was Special Projects Coordinator Erin Vest.

\*Members attended the meeting remotely pursuant to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Procedures for Trustee Videoconferencing.

The meeting of the Search Committee began at 4:04 p.m.

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The Search Committee reviewed the proposed job announcement for the Director position as drafted by Bradbury Miller Associates and suggested various amendments for grammar and clarity.

Member Craik joined the meeting at 4:26 p.m.

After final review, Member Craik moved to approve the job announcement as amended by the Committee for public posting. Member Amodeo seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

With no further business, on a motion from Member Buyer seconded by Member Amodeo the meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.

Chair El-Behairy stated that the Library Director Search closed last week. There is another Search Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 24.

Trustee Barnes arrived at 4:14 p.m.

Agenda Item E.4 – Policy Committee. Trustee Panty summarized the Policy Committee report as presented below.

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library  
Board of Trustees – Policy Committee  
February 19, 2026

Present: Chair Elaine Panty, Members Michael Amodeo, and Sharon Kelly. Also present were Library Trustee Adam Bojak, Interim Director Dorinda Darden, and Assistant to the Director Cait Goodrich

The meeting of the Policy Committee began at 4:07 p.m. A quorum was present.

Chair Panty began with the Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Harassment Policy. Interim Director Darden explained the amended policy as presented. The proposed changes are in order to match the Library's style guide and include the Library's new logo. Discussion ensued regarding the Library's legal counsel recommendation to remove a paragraph referencing affirmative action from the policy. Interim Director Darden stated that the Library's legal counsel made changes to the Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Harassment Policy to reflect the President's 2025 Executive Order (E.O.) 14173. A motion to approve was made by Trustee Amodeo, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously to move to the full Board.

Next, a proposed new Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy was reviewed. Interim Director Darden explained that the new Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy reflects the Library's legal counsel adopting the New York State's model policy. Trustee Amodeo motioned to approve, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously to move to the full Board.



Included in the Policy Committee's packets were proposed changes to the Complaint of Harassment, Discrimination, or Retaliation form. The proposed change is to adopt the form as part of both the Library's Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Harassment Policy and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy. The Policy Committee reviewed these forms. A grammatical change was suggested. Trustee Amodeo motioned to approve as amended, Trustee Kelly seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended to move to the full Board.

With no further business, on a motion by Trustee Amodeo, seconded by Trustee Kelly the Policy Committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding the wording in the proposed amended policies.

Agenda Item F – Report of the Director. Interim Director Dorinda Darden began her report by sharing that Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci, Assistant Deputy Directors Joy Testa Cinquino and Maria Lowe, Elma Public Library Director Stephanie Molnar, Grand Island Memorial Library Director Bridgette Heintz, Newstead Public Library Director Kristine Sutton, Hamburg Public Library Librarian/Manager Nicole Brown, Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Member Kimberly Johnson, and she attended *Library Advocacy Day* in Albany on February 3, 2026.

Interim Director Darden shared that they met with New York State Senator Patrick Gallivan, New York State Assembly Members Paul Bologna, Angelo Morinello, William Conrad, Patrick Chludzinski, Karen McMahon, as well as representatives from the offices of Assembly Members Crystal Peoples-Stokes, and Jonathan Rivera. In addition, Assistant Deputy Director Testa Cinquino and she met virtually with Senator April Baskin's office on February 5. The State Legislators are supportive of libraries throughout New York State and expressed their commitment to advocate for the increase in state funding.

Interim Director Darden distributed copies of the dedication to late Director John Spears in the new eleventh edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* compiled by the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association (ALA) to the Board of Trustees. She then read aloud the dedication as shown below.

“For John Spears, whose unwavering belief in intellectual freedom shaped this work. His passion for amplifying every voice and ensuring access for all is reflected in these pages”

Following that, Interim Director Darden shared that she is extremely pleased and excited to announce that the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's *Profoundly Public* Campaign won a silver Addy award as part of the American Advertising Awards. She stated that this is quite an achievement because it was a first-time library entry in a very ambitious and competitive category. Interim Director Darden gave special thanks to Marketing Manager Sean Piazza, Library Display Manager Dawn Stanton, and the entire Development & Communications team for creating an impactful multi-platform marketing and advertising

campaign featuring our new brand in and around Erie County on billboards, social media, TV, radio, print, metro buses, trains, movie theaters, the website, and library cards!

Next, Interim Director Darden shared that Rare Book Curator Heather Gring has created the *John Spears Oral History Project*. Staff, trustees, and the community are invited to share their stories about the late Director John Spears. The oral histories will be recorded in the Grosvenor Room here at the Central Library. These recordings will be stored on an internal hard drive with the potential in the future to be housed on the Library's Digital online platforms. Interim Director Darden has been in contact with John's partner Brian Dimit, who loves the idea of the project. Flyers were provided to the Board of Trustees in case they want to participate.

Interim Director Darden shared that Assistant Deputy Director Lowe attended the Erie County Legislature's *Health & Human Services Committee Meeting*, chaired by Legislator Lawrence Dupree this morning for the confirmation of Board of Trustees reappointments of Ted Johnson and Sharon Kelly.

Interim Director Darden shared that a number of programs and initiatives are in the planning stages. Several members of the Library staff are part of the Erie County Historical Commission's initiative to plan and implement programs and activities for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States in collaboration with other cultural organizations. Library programs will include events and exhibits highlighting Erie County's history and diversity such as the "*We the People*" *Quilting Project* in collaboration with Stitch Buffalo, and Explore & More – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum.

April is *Love Your Library* month. There is a paid, multi-media campaign planned for billboards, radio, TV, and social media focusing on the value of libraries. The theme is *Escape the Algorithm*.

The Library, Project Flight, and community partners are planning the 30<sup>th</sup> *Books for Kids* donation drive for the month of May.

Following that, Interim Director Darden shared that Assistant Deputy Director Testa Cinquino is working with the Library's rural Contract Libraries on their Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation's Western New York Rural Library Grant Program submissions due to the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) on March 31.

Bostwick Design Partnership is finalizing the Final Draft of the *Central Library Space Utilization Study* with plans to present to the Board in the spring.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has partnered with the New York State Unified Court System operating through the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Erie County Family Court to have the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library be a *Local Community Location* (LCL) for the *Virtual Court Access Network* (VCAN) program. This program, consisting of two phases, will provide services to individuals who may not have access to a computer and/or

internet or who are unable to travel to a courthouse. Equipment will be provided for these services. Phase 1 services include access to DIY forms, information about local legal services and resources, filing papers in some courts and case types, and printing of court forms. Phase 2 will offer additional services that include court filings, virtual court appearances by appointment, and virtual appointments with court-related entities such as lawyers, victim advocates, Department of Social Services, and other community resources. A celebration to launch the VCAN program is currently being planned.

Interim Director Darden shared that she has been keeping busy and hosted a tour for the Executive Director of Upper Hudson Library System Chris Sagaas, who was visiting our region.

Lastly, Interim Director Darden announced that James Mitaritonna has accepted the Assistant Deputy Director – Controller position effective June 1. He and his wife are relocating from Washington D.C.

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

**B&ECPL Monthly Report  
January 2026**



**Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** - The *45th Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* was held in the Dr. Eva M. Doyle Auditorium at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library on January 15. Interim Director **Dorinda Darden** provided the welcome remarks, and the Honorable Clifford Bell was the Master of Ceremonies for the event that featured an original rap performance by Marquéel Jeffries, known as Francs, original poetry performance by Lea Griffin, known as Lea The Teacha, and a musical performance by Ariel Shanice, known as REL Shanice. Forty attendees, including Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Chair Carima El-Behairy and Trustee Kimberly Johnson, attended the program. Community Engagement Manager **Dr. Hannah Quaintance** and System Adult Outreach Services Manager **Carol Kowalik-Happy** planned this special event.

Advertisements were placed with WBLK Radio and Buffalo Toronto Public Media (BTPM) Radio in advance of the event, and digital ad space was purchased with the Buffalo Criterion.

**Job Fair** – The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor hosted a *Job Fair* on the second floor Collections Gallery space at the Central Library on January 30. There were 52 participating businesses and

organizations along with 450 job seekers who explored the various employment opportunities available. In addition, 19 job seekers received assistance with their resumes in the TechKnow Lab at the Central Library.

**Online Winter Reading Contest** – The *Chill Out and Read Online Winter Reading Contest*, for children, teens, and adults runs from January 1 through February 28. This year also includes a staff contest as well. Participants record the minutes read for a chance to win prizes. Every minute of reading earns participants one point and 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.

**Rare Book Room Exhibit** - The opening celebration of the Rare Book Room's new exhibit, *AP Gorny: Different from the Rest* was held at the Central Library on January 29. Eighty people, including Mr. Gorny, were present at the opening of the exhibit, which includes examples of his prints and artist books along with extensive audiovisual collections that tell the story of his life in Buffalo and explores how the city influenced his work. For the next 10 months this exhibit, curated by Rare Book Room Curator **Heather Gring** and designed by Assistant Library Display Artist **Helen Shandraw** will teach the community about the life and work of AP (Anthony Peter) Gorny a Buffalo printmaker, photographer, sculptor, bookmaker, and performer whose artist books have reached the Vatican Library and the Guggenheim.

Given this will be the only exhibition in the Rare Book Room for 2026, ad buys were more aggressive with radio ads placed on BTPM NPR, digital ads placed with *Buffalo Rising* and *Buffalo Spree*, and a back cover ad in the latest issue of the quarterly arts journal *Cornelia*.

**Together as One: The Journey Continues** - The Buffalo African American Museum in partnership with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and many other cultural organizations held a press conference in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on January 29, announcing *Together As One: The Journey Continues*, a community-wide collaboration for Black History Month in February. **Dorinda Darden** spoke at the event. 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 will 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.

The Library will be continuing its support of Black History Month and our slate of events through advertisements in the month of February.

**Tarot Series at the North Park Library** – North Park Branch Manager **Alyssa Clark**, coordinated and hosted two of the library's three- part series on tarot this month. On January 5, **Heather Gring**, shared an assortment of historic tarot decks from the Grosvenor Room collection. A tarot educator, from *Spiritually Rooted*, presented on the history of tarot and the major arcana, and continued with the minor arcana at the second program on January 27. The third class, to be held in February, will culminate with a raffle for tarot decks, courtesy of Llewellyn Publishers.

**Bookmark Contest at the North Park Branch Library** – The North Park Branch Library sponsored a bookmark contest for youth. City of Buffalo library staff and owner of the

Children's bookstore *Alice Ever After* Meg Howe judged the submissions. There were three winners. Their artwork was printed on bookmarks, which are now available at the North Park Library. Winners also received a ten-dollar gift certificate to *Alice Ever After*.

2025 Yearend statistics were finalized and several documents designed by the Library's Graphic's Department were produced including the *Library's Return on Investment* showing for every \$1 received in County funding, the Library returned \$4.24 in services back to the community. Additionally, 2025 overall (all libraries included) stats showed:

- Circulation: 7,152,667 materials
- Digital materials borrowed: 2,307,270
- Programming: 358,818
- Wi-Fi sessions: 827,660
- Public computer sessions: 299,654
- Website visits: 16,633,930
- Visitors: 2,351,891
- Library card holders: 409,076
- Social media friends, fans, followers: 40,866 \*
- Fundraising revenue: \$546,989

\*Represents only Central/System social media accounts

After 600 programs produced by the Development & Communications Department, IMAGINE Buffalo, the weekly live presentation and interview show featuring a diverse variety of local experts and community leaders representing history, preservation, arts, community, health, wellness, education, and more, began winding down in January with guests including Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, Tala Harden, Dr. George Nicholas, and Ebony White. IMAGINE Buffalo debuted in 2009 in the Central Library and has been presented via Zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic. The shows are archived on the Library's YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BuffaloErieCountyPublicLibrary>. IMAGINE Buffalo is hosted by volunteer Dennis Galucki, in partnership with C-SAAHN (The Center for the Study of Art, Architecture, History, & Nature). The final program will be on Tuesday, February 17 at 12:30 p.m.

## 1. Programs and Outreach

### Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

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

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

- *Genealogy Training: Book a Librarian session on Ancestry for Southern United States research*
- *Screening: What Does It All Mean? Exploring the Dictionary Video Curator’s Tour in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library*
- *Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Book Club*
- *New Year Calligraphy Workshop* – Grosvenor Room at the Central Library

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

- *Book a Librarian*
- *Book a Technology Trainer*
- *Notary Service*
- *Shop for Free Clothing* event - Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library presented by U.B. HEALS
- *Wellness @ Central*
- *Mental Health Resource Fair* - Kenmore West High School
- *Workshop: Demystifying NYS Civil Service and NY Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (NY HELPS) program* held in the Central Library Meeting Room presented by Adam Dolce, Outreach Specialist for the New York State Department of Civil Service

**Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services**

- *Story Time* – North Park Branch Library
- *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration* at Explore & More – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children’s Museum

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

Unexpected HVAC repairs and winter weather affected the Mobile Services schedule throughout the month. The Library on Wheels Bookmobile was off the road January 7 and 8 for replacement and installation of a new thermostat. Despite the repair to the thermostat, bitter winds and blowing snow kept the Bookmobile off the road on January 15 and 20, and again from January 26 through 29. The Library2Go van, focusing on services to seniors, had to either cancel or reschedule stops on January 15 and 20 due to winter weather. Despite these challenges, core services, particularly Interlibrary Loan

and Library by Mail, continued to operate at a high level. Staff filled 1,636 Interlibrary Loan requests and sent out 414 items via Library by Mail.

### 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*
- *Free Legal Services (Central & Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)*

#### Individual Branches:

The Isaías González-Soto Branch Library has seen an increase in community run programs and events taking place at their branch since the reopening after renovations to the space.

#### Ongoing

- *Hispanic Heritage Council Music Academy (weekly)*
- *Gems + Jewels Youth With Purpose (weekly)*
- *Dungeons & Dragons (weekly)*
- *Fuel Station Church Bible Meeting (weekly)*
- *Hudson Valley Writers Guild Creative Writing Classes (weekly)*
- *La Letra Dorada Spanish Literature Creative Writing/Reading Group (bi-monthly)*
- *Alzheimer's Association, HER Redefined Red Tent Meetings, and Community Teas (Intermittent)*
- *Democratic Socialists of America, Buffalo Chapter (Intermittent)*
- *Prospect Hill Block Club (Quarterly)*

#### Tours and Visits:

Through the month of January the Rare Book Room coordinated five researcher sessions and three one-on-one tours. The Grosvenor Room's Memory Lab had seven appointments as well as walk-in sessions with community members interested in preserving their memories with the digital conversion stations. In addition, Special Collections staff provided a Rare Books vault tour at the Central Library on January 21, to the Oxford Pennant team along with staff from Development & Communications.

## 2. Collection Development

### Physical Collections\*:

Item Adds

Title Adds

Collection Size

	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,311	2,311	288	288	503,971
Young Adult Print	433	433	114	114	68,255
Adult Print	2,919	2,919	675	675	1,753,953
Media	2,115	2,115	317	317	506,091
Other*	1,213	1,213	26	26	169,844
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8,991</b>	<b>8,991</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>1,420</b>	<b>3,002,114</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

**Electronic Collections\*:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	3,678	3,678	1,682	1,682	135,532
eAudiobooks	8,877	8,877	433	433	66,927
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,587
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12,555</b>	<b>12,555</b>	<b>2,115</b>	<b>2,115</b>	<b>209,046</b>

**All Collections:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,546</b>	<b>21,546</b>	<b>3,535</b>	<b>3,535</b>	<b>3,211,160</b>

**Digital Collections:**

As part of the *AP Gorny: Different from the Rest* exhibit, 85 items were digitized for the Library's Digital Collections. Items included AP's writings, materials from prior art exhibitions, and ephemera from Buffalo's past.

**Rare Book and Special Collections:**

Rare Book and Special Collections acquired new material. These materials include 4 new typeset and riso-print posters made by Jameson Hampton at Western New York Book Arts Center, all about Buffalo (the Bills, the Pink, INTERSECT); first edition texts from the German small press publisher Black Letter Press which includes a new translation of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, and a new printing of William Blake's *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*. Finally, local indie music promoter and collector Dean Brownrout donated his collection of punk posters from shows he organized and promoted at the Continental in the early 1980s.

The Special Collections Department evaluated 78 RPM vintage record donations received in 2024. The records span between 1923 and 1957, including a rare Edison record. The majority of them are 1950s popular songs by Nashville-based musicians and are significant to preserve as part of the evolution of country music and its recording formats.

**3. Fundraising**

**Fundraising:**

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
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Annual Appeal Total	January 1 – January 31, 2026	\$29,941.72
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**Highlights:**

In the month of January, the Online Store had:

- 86 orders
- 112 items sold

**4. Facilities**

**Facilities:**

On January 7, a pre-bid walkthrough was held at the Leroy R. Coles, Jr. Branch Library, in advance of the planned construction there. The following week, bids were opened, with Allstate General Contracting, Inc. as the lowest, qualified bidder. A pre-award meeting was held to confirm the scope of work with the contractor and answer any remaining questions regarding the project and an award recommendation letter was submitted to the City of Buffalo. This phase of the project will rebuild the existing air handler unit and add a Siemens Control system at the library.

On January 7, a meeting was held at the Crane Branch Library to kick off the roof replacement and public access project. Patterson-Stevens, Inc. will be the company completing the work. Discussion topics included payment processes, permit applications, contact information and building access, site staging, work schedules, and possible start dates. Depending on weather conditions, a mid to late April start was suggested, with the contractor to update all parties at the end of March regarding a start date.

On January 15, Peterson Heating and Cooling returned to the Isaías González-Soto Branch Library to continue their work on the HVAC unit. During this time, they ran new electrical components from the roof condenser down to the air handler unit and from the air handler unit to the roof. Remaining elements of the project that need to be completed include replacement of switches, configuring air flow stations, running conduits and wiring for the Siemens Control system, and painting of doors and walls. The remaining work is scheduled for the spring, after the heating season.

On January 23, the Central Library switchgear replacement project began. This project was a complete replacement of the library’s original electrical switchgear. Schneider Electric replaced breakers, bracing, wiring, and transformers, in conjunction with Frey Electric. The project was a success, with the remaining punch list items of installation of one backup breaker, lighting and label installation, and staff training on the new components.

**5. Staff Development**

**Safety-Focused Webinar for All Staff** – In January, Human Resources purchased access to the Library 2.0 webinar *Keeping Predatory People Out of the Library: Know the Signs of Harm*. This webinar covered what to do, who to call, when to do it, and how to intervene safely and effectively when identifying individuals who pose threats to patrons, staff, and others. The webinar was posted to the Library’s internal training webpage on January 16, and 28 staff have completed the training since it became available.

**Youth Services Group Messtival Training** – The January 15 Youth Services Group meeting included a presentation by Librarian Ashley Cassidy about a successful program hosted at the Elma Public Library over the summer. *Messtival* was an outdoor sensory program that involved a variety of activities for children to engage in messy play. Attendees learned about the planning and implementation of the program and suggestions for hosting similar events. Nineteen staff attended the live presentation, and a recording was posted to the intranet for further reference.

**Webinars** – Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in January, with several staff members attending these sessions: *Building a Culture of Accessibility at Your Library* (from NYS Library), *Giving Effective Feedback* (from Niche Academy), and *Weed'em and Reap: Keeping a Healthy Collection Through Weeding* (from CLRC).

**Communications**

**Media Coverage**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library garnered coverage across a range of topics in January.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration	WIVB: <a href="#">Buffalo hosts MLK Day celebration</a> (1/15)

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Press Release	AP Gorny: Different From The Rest	<a href="#">Buffalo &amp; Erie County Public Library Presents AP Gorny: Different From the Rest</a>
Earned Media	AP Gorny: Different From The Rest	BTPM NPR: <a href="#">Buffalo library previews exhibit of AP Gorny's life, artwork</a> (1/16)
Earned Media	AP Gorny: Different From The Rest	WIVB Evening Dish: <a href="#">New AP Gorny Exhibit</a> (1/16)
Earned Media	AP Gorny: Different From The Rest	Buffalo Rising: <a href="#">Different from the Rest: Exploring the Art and Legacy of AP Gorny</a> (1/25)
Podcast	AP Gorny: Different From The Rest	WNY Soundstage: <a href="#">Different from the Rest: Exploring the Art and Legacy of AP Gorny</a> (1/25)

Joint Press Release	Black History Month	<a href="#">'Together As One: The Journey Continues' celebrates Black History Month with over a dozen community partners</a>
Mention	Black History Month	<b>BTPM NPR:</b> <a href="#">Clifford Bell is a walking chapter in the story of Buffalo's African American history</a>

Mass emails sent in January: Public Periodical, January edition – sent to over 95,000 library cardholders, open rate 41% open rate.

**Social Media:**

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	48	48	2,699	2,699	168	16,020
Flickr	-	-	1,222	1,222	0	59
Google Ads <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	2,690	2,690	N/A	N/A
Instagram	12	12	2,998	2,998	213	9,530
Pinterest	1	1	20	20	-1	2,050
Twitter (X)	35	35	33	33	16	10,369
Bluesky	9	9	42	42	27	1,284
YouTube	9	9	126	126	7	884
TikTok	1	1	1,548	1,548	12	1,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>11,378</b>	<b>11,378</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>41,276</b>

<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.

**6. 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 (BAAM)
- The Buffalo History Museum
- Buffalo Public Schools
- Erie County Historical Commission
- Erie County Youth Board
- Explore Buffalo
- Live Well Erie
- Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties
- New York Library Association (NYLA) Youth Services Section (YSS)
- Nioga Library System

- Starlight Studios
- Stitch Buffalo
- North County Library System
- Together As One
- University at Buffalo
- Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC)

**7. Planning for the Future**

An in-person/ virtual prep session for those attending *Library Advocacy Day* in Albany was held on January 21. **Dorinda Darden** and Assistant Deputy Director **Joy Testa Cinquino** presented information on the state funding requests to Elma Public Library Director **Stephanie Molnar**, Hamburg Public Library Librarian **Nicole Brown**, Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer **Angela Marinucci**, Assistant Deputy Director **Maria Lowe**, Grand Island Memorial Library Director **Bridgette Heintz**, Newstead Public Library Director **Kristine Sutton** and Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Member Kimberly Johnson.

**8. Director Activities**

**List of Meetings and Events**

**Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden**

**January 2026**

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
January 1, 2026	Event - Inauguration of the 64th Mayor of the City of Buffalo Sean M. Ryan
January 5, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
January 5, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
January 5, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
January 6, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
January 6, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
January 7, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
January 7, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
January 7, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Zonta Club of Kenmore
January 8, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
January 8, 2026	Meeting - Carol Kowalik-Happy
January 8, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Executive Committee
January 9, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Kevin Zawadzki, Ronald Jaros, Jr. regarding the Clerical and Maintenance Union (CMU)
January 9, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
January 9, 2026	Phone Interview - Power 93.7 WBLK
January 9, 2026	Phone Meeting - Kristi Dougherty

# Minutes of the Board of Trustees

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January 9, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Bradbury Miller Associates Managing Consultant Briana Trudell
January 12, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
January 12, 2026	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Steering Committee
January 12, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
January 12, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
January 13, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
January 13, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
January 13, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
January 13, 2026	Virtual Event - IMAGINE Buffalo
January 13, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library Systems Directors Organization (PULISDO)
January 13, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
January 15, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
January 15, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System (PLS) Directors
January 15, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
January 15, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees
January 15, 2026	Event - 45th Annual Community Celebration Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 16, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
January 16, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
January 20, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
January 20, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
January 20, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
January 21, 2026	Virtual/In-Person Meeting - Library Advocacy Day Informational Session
January 21, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
January 21, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
January 21, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
January 21, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
January 21, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
January 22, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
January 22, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci, Hamburg Public Library Director Brian Hoth and Manager Nicole Brown
January 22, 2026	Meeting - Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County
January 23, 2026	Event - Fireside Chat and Q&A with Buffalo Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Pascal Mubenga
January 23, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
January 23, 2026	Virtual Meeting - NYLA Library Advocacy Day Preparation
January 27, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci

January 27, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
January 27, 2026	Meeting - Judy Fachko
January 27, 2026	Virtual Event - IMAGINE Buffalo
January 27, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
January 27, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Board
January 28, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
January 28, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
January 28, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Michigan Street Preservation Corporation Board
January 29, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
January 29, 2026	Press Conference - Together as One: The Journey Continues
January 29, 2026	Exhibit Opening - AP Gorny: Different from the Rest
January 30, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino

**Appendices**  
**A. Monthly Statistics**

**System Programming Statistics:**

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs		Total Attendance	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	1106	1106	2924	2924
Children 5 and under	830	830	3780	3780
Children 6-11	2244	2244	3612	3612
Intergenerational/Combined	3668	3668	5864	5864
Teens	180	180	357	357
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>8028</b>	<b>8028</b>	<b>16537</b>	<b>16537</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>8028</b>	<b>8028</b>	<b>16537</b>	<b>16537</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	12	12	87	87
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	0	0	0	0
Intergenerational/Combined	3	3	53	53
Teens	14	14	14	14
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	0	0	0	0
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	2	611	611
Intergenerational/Combined	7	7	1409	1409
Teens	0	0	0	0
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2174</b>	<b>2174</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8066</b>	<b>8066</b>	<b>18711</b>	<b>18711</b>

\*Regular programs include group programs, one-on-one programs, and self-directed programs (Including individual take & make crafts).

**Other Statistics:**

Consolidated statistics on library visits, website visits, circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and program attendance and a summary of open hours can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/about-becpl/monthly-statistics>.

Detailed reports on circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and library visits can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2026-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

**B. Contracting Library Activity Reports**

**Elma Public Library** – Submitted by Library Director Stephanie Molnar

**Chair Yoga**– With the help of *New Sky Coaching*, we offered yoga sessions from December through February with an average attendance of 15 patrons. Chair yoga is good for strengthening and lengthening muscles and is particularly helpful to increase seniors’ mobility.

**University Express** – In December we wrapped our fall “semester” of University Express through the Erie County Department of the Aging by offering programs taught by local volunteers aimed at patrons 50 and over. From September-December, we had speakers on such topics as Mark Twain, Real Estate, and the conflict in Ukraine.

**Cookbook Club** – We continue to see success in our Cookbook Club. Patrons choose recipes from a selected cookbook, and we all share together, potluck style. Our average attendance is about 12.

**Dance With Me** – A toddler dance class led by an instructor from the Buffalo Dance Center. Miss Stacey donates her and her instructors’ time to help our little ones work on their gross motor skills and have a fun time dancing!

**Family Story Time** – We now offer a Family Story Time for ages birth-5, three days a week. Choral reading, movement songs, and yoga moves are included.

**Scavenger Hunts** – We have been consistently holding monthly scavenger hunts around the children’s area. January’s theme is in honor of Lewis Carroll’s birthday. Children earn a prize when they have completed the scavenger hunt.

**Bring Your Child to the Library Day** – On February 7, we are hosting an Eric Carle-themed event for Bring Your Child to the Library Day. There will be games, snacks, and a scavenger hunt.

**February Break Week** – During February Break Week (February 17-20), we are hosting a Stuffed Animal Hospital, a Makerspace event, and a Princess Story Time with Mrs. New York Emmalee Cinotti.

**Lackawanna Public Library** – Submitted by Library Director Danielle Ptak

**Noon Year's Eve** – The Lackawanna Public Library hosted a party for children and family to celebrate the New Year without worrying about bedtimes, complete with crafts, countdown, balloon drop, and sparkling grape juice toast. Sixty attendees of all ages painted fireworks and made their own confetti poppers and party hats.

**Adult Craft Circle** – A popular monthly program held regularly on the first Tuesday of the month, January's Adult Craft Circle saw eighteen patrons in attendance to make adorable book art hedgehogs.

**Press Release** – On Thursday, January 15, Lackawanna Public Library hosted Mayor Annette Iafallo, New York State Senator April Baskin, and Assemblymember Jonathan Rivera as they announced that the Lackawanna Public Library would be receiving \$100,000 from the state of New York for capital improvement projects, as part of \$650,000 in funding for the City of Lackawanna for infrastructure improvements. The announcement included mention of the Lackawanna City Council's recent decision to pursue historic status for the Lackawanna Public Library as a remaining Carnegie Library.

**Idols vs. Demons Party** – This was a party for all the K-Pop Demon Hunter fans. There were themed crafts and games for partygoers while they sang along to their favorite songs from the movie. Participants could also visit an "Idol Salon" to dress up with hair chalk and receive face-painted patterns.

**Tune the Tale** – Tune the Tale is a new grant funded program that will be offered by the Erie Niagara Conservatory of Music at the Lackawanna Public Library on Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., running February through the end of May. In each 45-minute session, children and caregivers explore a picture book using rhythm, movement, instruments, and vocal play. Designed for ages 4–7, the program supports early literacy, musical development, and creative expression.

**Social Work Intern** – The Lackawanna Public Library is one of the libraries in the system that partnered with Buffalo State University for Social Work Intern placement for the 2026 spring semester. Now through the beginning of May, Social Work Intern Ellen Beagle will be available for one-on-one appointments on Thursdays and Fridays, to help patrons with online registration for benefits assistance and referrals.

### **B&ECPL Monthly Report February 2026**

**Black History Month Programs** - System-wide sponsored *Black History Month* programs were provided at select Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations. Programs included *Two Wars: The Road to Integration*, an award-winning film created with the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park about the history of segregation and integration in the United States Military. Filmmaker and Director of Education for the Naval Park Steven Tedesco led a discussion following the screening on February 12 in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library. *Mojos, Mermaids, Medicine, and 400 Years of Black Women's Magic* with Dr. Lindsey Stewart, a virtual author event was held on February 12. *Vibrant Strings* concerts held at the Lancaster Public Library and Orchard Park Public



Library on February 12 and February 28 respectively, and the *City of Distant Neighbors: Histories of Segregation* presented by historian and Zine creator James Coughlin on February 21 at the Elaine M. Panty Branch Library. A *Black History Month Reading List* created for all ages was posted on the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's website.

The Colored Musicians Club performed at the Central Library on February 15 to eighty attendees. The concert was the first of three this spring as part of the *Sunday Concerts @ Central*, coordinated by Community Engagement Manager **Hannah Quaintance**. The next concert is scheduled for March 22 and features *Kody & Herren*, a Springville-based folk duo. Lydia Herren is also the Director of the Boston Public Library.

Rare Book Room Curator **Heather Gring** hosted the Buffalo History Channel screening in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library on February 14, featuring Doug Ruffin's interview with a member of the Buffalo chapter of the Black Panther Party, Kevin Blackford. Special Collections Manager **Susan Buttaccio** hosted the *City of Distant Neighbors: Histories of Segregation*, as well as, *And a Shot Rang Out: A.J. Smitherman & Buffalo's Connection to the Tulsa Race Massacre*, a documentary produced by educator, historian and community leader Dr. Barbara Seals Nevergold, and filmmaker Tala Harden, on February 19 and February 21 respectively in the Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library.

In addition, Genealogy Specialist **Rhonda Hoffman** and Special Collections Librarian **Adam Rubin** participated in the *Black History Month* celebration at the William-Emslie YMCA in Buffalo on February 25. **Rhonda** provided a presentation titled, *Stories That Connect Us: Exploring Family History* and **Adam** spoke about the Library's Oral History kits and digital preservation equipment.

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leaders are Readers School Award for Literacy** – Buffalo Public School #30 Frank A. Sedita Academy, as the recipient of Project Flight's *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leaders are Readers School Award for Literacy* presented an assembly program on February 5. Co-Directors of Project Flight Dr. Geraldine Bard and Dr. Elizabeth Cappella, Interim Director **Dorinda Darden**, New York State Office of General Services Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs Robinson Hernandez, and Regional Director for the Buffalo Regional Office of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Tamara Rivers Simmons, provided remarks at the event. System Adult Outreach Services Librarian and Project Flight BookBank Manager **Melissa Blattner** took pictures throughout the event. Over 5,000 books were awarded to the students and school.

**Library Advocacy Day** – **Dorinda Darden**, Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer **Angela Marinucci**, Assistant Deputy Directors **Joy Testa Cinquino** and **Maria Lowe**, Elma Public Library Director **Stephanie Molnar**, Grand Island Memorial Library Director **Bridgette Heintz**, Newstead Public Library Director **Kristine Sutton**, Hamburg Public Library Manager **Nicole Brown**, and Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board Member Kimberly Johnson attended the New York Library Association (NYLA) *Library Advocacy Day* held in Albany on February 3. They met with New York State Senator Patrick Gallivan, New York State Assembly Members Paul Bologna, Angelo Morinello, William Conrad, Patrick Chludzinski, Karen McMahon and representatives from Assembly Members Crystal Peoples-Stokes, and Jonathan Rivera offices. In addition, **Dorinda Darden** and **Joy Testa Cinquino** met virtually with Senator April Baskin's office on

February 5. The State Legislators are supportive of libraries throughout New York State and expressed their commitment to advocate for the increase in state funding for Fiscal Year 2027 and legislative priorities for 2026 proposed by the NYLA. Subsequently, **Dorinda Darden** received a letter from Senator Gallivan that was circulated to State Legislative Leaders in support of an increase in funding for Libraries in Governor Kathy Hochul's FY 2027 enacted budget.

**Online Winter Reading Contest** - The *Chill Out and Read Online Winter Reading Contest*, for children, teens, and adults ran from January 1 through February 28. This year's contest successfully engaged readers across all age groups. Participants included 124 children who read 101,474 minutes, 211 adults who read 514,815 minutes, and 24 teens who read 32,613 minutes. A staff contest was also provided with 116 participants who read 408,044 minutes. 475 participants read 1,056,946 minutes, which is equivalent to 734 days of continuous reading!

**Public Library Association** - System Adult Outreach Services Librarian **Jacob Rachwal** presented a webinar for the Public Library Association (PLA) titled, *Career Connections at Your Library*. **Jacob** discussed developing partnerships, planning job fairs and providing one-on-one appointments for job seekers in the library.

**Take Your Child to the Library Day** - *Take Your Child to the Library Day* was celebrated throughout Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations on February 7. System Youth Outreach Services distributed Eric Carle themed celebration kits that included stickers, crafts, activity sheets, and a scavenger hunt to 31 libraries who requested them. Over 400 patrons participated.



Photos - Children enjoying *Take Your Child to the Library Day*. The child on the right is holding the Eric Carle themed scavenger hunt activity sheet

The Central Library Children's Room and the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library were featured in an article in the most recent issue of *The Buffalo Spree* entitled "*Libraries with Littles*" that highlighted engaging children's spaces in libraries in Western New York. Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library Librarian **Heather Bermingham** and Central Library Children's Room Manager, **Dan Lewandowski** were interviewed for the article.



Photo – Screenshot of Buffalo Spree’s article “Libraries with Littles”

Dan Lewandowski initiated a partnership this month with Every Bottom Covered, an organization that provides diapers to families in need. During diaper pick-up times, library staff will promote the *1,000 Books before Kindergarten* program and other early literacy initiatives, while also helping families obtain free books to build their home libraries.

Central Adult Services hosted *Benton Music and Museum of Buffalo* for a Byzantine music program. Presenters Nick and Ayame performed on period instruments and narrated a video presentation.

Central Adult Services Librarian Trainee **Faith Miller**, Senior Page **Tyler Whitehead**, and Senior Library Clerk **Hailey Oldham**, hosted the first two *Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) at the Library* program on February 7 and 21. Players chose between two different D&D campaigns - *Ravenloft: Mistwalkers* (Gothic Horror and Dark Fantasy themed) and *Candlekeep Chronicles* (High Fantasy themed). The program was carefully designed so patrons can drop-in and enjoy a campaign without a long-term commitment. A February highlight from Central’s Launch Pad has been a pair of patrons, Dave Jurenovich, and Jonathan Lambert, who have been recording electric guitar playthrough videos for online release. The videos are available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6VOJXRdpQs>

## 1. Programs and Outreach

### Central Library – Adult and Launch Pad Services

- Cookbook Club
- 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*
- *Afternoon Art Break*
- *Trivia @ the Library!*
- *Stitch Circle*
- *Taoist Tai Chi*
- *Dungeons and Dragons (new!)*

**Central Library – Teen Services**

- *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)
- *Daily Craft Programs during Mid-Winter Break*
- *Kid Librarian*
- *Get Caught Reading* (kids get prizes for “getting caught” reading in the Children’s Room)
- *Scavenger Hunts*

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

- *Book a Librarian Genealogy sessions*
- *Tarot Tuesday*
- *Paging Through History: The Grosvenor Room Quiet Reading Club*

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

- *Book a Librarian*
- *Book a Technology Trainer*
- *Notary Service*
- *Blueprint to Homeownership* event – Delavan Grider Community Center
- *M&T Bank Emerging Entrepreneurs (EE) Resource Day* - State University of New York at Buffalo (UB) Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership
- *Prepare to Fly Job Fair* - Charter School for Applied Technologies
- *Romance Book Swap and Social Hour* - Julia Boyer Reinstein Library
- *Clothing Giveaway* - Ring of Knowledge at the Central Library presented by Amazing Women’s Outreach Inc.
- *Wellness @ Central*
- *Income Tax Assistance* - TechKnow Lab at the Central Library presented by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

**Central Library – System Youth Outreach Services**

- *Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) Little Kids Pre-Concert* events

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

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

- Tabling: *Saturday Academy* – Buffalo Public School (BPS) #97 Harvey Austin School
- *Love of Learning & Family Literacy Night* – BPS #3 D’Youville Porter Campus School
- Tabling: *Saturday Academy* – BPS #206 South Park High School

**All Branches:**

- *Take n’ Make craft bags and scavenger hunts* (themes: Black History, Lunar New Year, Mardi Gras, Valentine’s Day, Ramadan, Olympics, etc.)

**Examples of February Take n’ Makes**

*Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library take n’ make craft celebrating the history of Kente Cloth weaving*



*Photos – Various examples of the Kente Cloth weaving take n’ make*

Dudley Branch Library’s February take n’ make craft was created by Branch Manager **Zoe Grimes**, who researched the history of the abolitionist movement and sailing in the Great Lakes, specifically the ‘freedom ships,’ reaching out to the maritime archaeologist who did the original research on these ships.



*Photos – Great Lakes ‘Freedom Ships’ craft with a hand-out providing further explanation*

**Multiple Branches:**

- *Chess*
- *Storytime*
- *Board Game and Video Gaming Groups*

- *Adult Book Groups by theme: General fiction, Horror, 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 University 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*
- *2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Theatre classes*
- *Stay and Play for preschoolers*

**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.

- *Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York Music Academy (Isaías González-Soto)*
- *Short Story Open Mic (Crane)*
- *DMV services provided by Erie County Clerk’s Office (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)*
- *Hawk Creek (East Clinton)*
- *Black History all Year Long (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)*
- *Tarot Reading (North Park)*

**Outreach:**

- *Lighthouse Center preschool visit (Frank E. Merriweather, Jr.)*
- *Saturday Academy BPS #3 D’Youville Porter Campus School (Isaías González-Soto)*
- *West Side Community Services: Love your Hood (Isaías González-Soto)*

**Tours and Visits:**

- *BPS #301 Burgard High School class visit (Central)*
- *BPS #99 Stanley M. Makowski Early Childhood Center (Central)*

A Rare Book Room tour for the Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Library Support Staff Committee was provided on February 26. Four additional Rare Book Room tours were conducted throughout the month.

**2. Collection Development**

**Physical Collections:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
Juvenile Print	2,996	5,307	293	581	505,618
Young Adult Print	455	888	102	216	68,192
Adult Print	3,315	6,234	650	1,325	1,752,229
Media	1,311	3,426	180	497	505,575

Other*	1,836	3,049	10	36	169,201
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9,913</b>	<b>18,904</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>3,000,815</b>

\*Includes magazines, generic copies, and other.

**Electronic Collections\*:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
eBooks	4,319	7,997	1,341	3,023	134,160
eAudiobooks	9,521	18,398	394	827	65,815
Digital Magazines	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6,548
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>13,840</b>	<b>26,395</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>3,850</b>	<b>206,523</b>

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

**All Collections:**

	Item Adds		Title Adds		Collection Size
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,753</b>	<b>45,299</b>	<b>2,970</b>	<b>6,505</b>	<b>3,207,338</b>

**Rare Book and Special Collections:**

The Special Collections Department processed the Klezmer music collection donated by the family of Amrom Chodos (1944-2018), a local clarinetist and music educator.

The Rare Book Room acquired multiple vinyl LP's by rock musician Mark Freeland this month, as well as an 1815 (incomplete) edition of *Etchings Of Remarkable Beggars, Itinerant Traders And Other Persons Of Notoriety In London And Its Environs*, by John Thomas Smith. The family of local author Jack Foran has donated a copy of the 1891 newspaper calling for "Home Rule for Ireland!" advocated by Exile McBride.

### 3. Fundraising

**Fundraising:**

Campaign Name	Campaign Dates	Raised to Date
Annual Appeal	January 1 - February 28, 2026	\$36,223,31

**Highlights:**

The Development & Communications Department and the IT Department are working with FSH Technologies on the transition of a new cloud-based donor management system for tracking all donations, fundraising, event ticketing, and monthly reporting. The App will also support the Library's donor and Library card monthly newsletter *Public Periodical*. The new system is expected to be up and running in the next several months.

The Development & Communications Department is working with rural libraries in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System on their grant proposals to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (through the Western New York and Rochester Regional Library Resource Councils'). The Wilson Foundation produced two podcasts to assist libraries

with funding ideas. **Joy Testa Cinquino** and Launch Pad Makerspace Manager **Jordan Smith** were interviewed for the podcasts.

#### 4. Staff Development

**Compliance Training Platform Update** – In February, Human Resources successfully transitioned all staff to the Skillsoft Percipio platform for compliance training. Staff will have until December 15 to complete three required modules on harassment, workplace violence, and cybersecurity. This platform is provided through Erie County, and it includes access to a variety of business-related training programs for staff to explore.

**Security Training Course** – Beginning February 16, Director of Security and Safety Management **Aaron Swan** and Senior Building Guard **Amanda Hernandez** are attending the University of Wisconsin 6-week virtual course *Library Security: Training for Worst Case Scenarios and Everyday Conflicts*. The course covers commonsense responses, policies and procedures, internal communications, and strategies to gain community support for all types of security issues.

**Webinars** – Employees participated in a variety of webinars and other online learning programs in February, with several staff members attending these sessions: *Effective Communication: Fostering a Welcoming Environment for Our Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Patrons* (from New York State Library), *Responding to ICE at the Library: Real World Approaches* (from Public Library Association (PLA)), and *Succession Planning to Build Future Leaders* (from Central New York Library Resources Council (CLRC)).

#### 5. Communications

##### Media Coverage

**Black History Month: Happenings at Buffalo & Erie County Public Library** - WBLK radio announcer Yasmin Young interviewed **Dorinda Darden** about the Library as a community hub for Black history resources and programming during Black History Month – spotlighting the library's collections, research guides, and a series of Central Library events – including film screenings on integration, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and Buffalo's own overlooked role in the broader Black American story.

Type of Communication	Topic	Air Date / Publish Date
Earned Media	Black History Month Happenings	WBLK: <a href="#">Buffalo Black History Is At The Buffalo Library</a> (2/11)

**Concluding Black History Month** – and utilizing research tools with the Central Library's Grosvenor Room – Spectrum News interviewed **Dorinda Darden** on Buffalo's overlooked history as a pioneer in jury diversity.

Buffalo was likely home to the second Black juror in U.S. history – and it was Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's records room and newspaper archives that helped surface, verify, and share this remarkable and underreported local history.



Earned Media	Diversity in Jury Pools & WNY Connections	<b>Spectrum News:</b> <a href="#">Paving the way for diversity in jury pools</a> (3/1)
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Earned Media	Library Advocacy Day in Albany	<b>Bee Newspapers:</b> <a href="#">Advocacy day</a> (2/11)
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**Clarence Public Library, Leader in Literacy**

Clarence Public Library – taking steps to align with the Science of Reading, and moving in the same direction as their school district and the New York State Education Department – was featured prominently as a leader in literacy in New York State.

Newsletter	Clarence Public Library is leading the way in New York State	<b>WNY Education Alliance:</b> <a href="#">The Intersection of Literacy &amp; Libraries</a> (2/13)
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Social Media Interview	<i>The Librarians Screening</i> – and a background on Book Banning In advance of a joint event in March with Buffalo Toronto Public Media (BTPM) (3/7) – a screening of <i>The Librarians</i> and a panel including <b>Susan Buttaccio</b> – BTPM visited the Central Library and spoke with <b>Heather Gring</b> , who walked through titles that have been banned, and offered a perspective on the importance of free access and unobstructed intellectual freedom.	<b>BTPM:</b> <a href="#">The Librarians and Book Banning</a> (2/18)
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*Buffalo Spree* led a multi-story feature on Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, with visits to and conversations with branches around Erie County, covering a wide range of topics on the history of the system, the improvements to the Crane Branch Library in the Elmwood Village, and events focused on children that occur across our branches.

*NB: Errors in the print / digital edition have been flagged to editors.*

Earned Media	History of the System	<b>Buffalo Spree:</b> <a href="#">The Buffalo &amp; Erie County Public Library's rich history</a> (2/25)
Earned Media	Crane Branch Overhaul	<b>Buffalo Spree:</b> <a href="#">New chapter at Crane</a> (2/25)
Earned Media	Children's Activities in the Library System	<b>Spree:</b> <a href="#">Libraries with littles</a> (3/4)

**Social Media:**

	Staff Activity		Public Activity		Followers	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month (New)	Total
Facebook	30	78	1,258	3,957	68	16,088
Flickr	-	-	2,314	3,536	-	59
Google Ads <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	2,254	4,944	N/A	N/A
Instagram	9	21	26,743	29,741	510	10,040
Pinterest	-	1	24	44	1	2,051
Twitter (X)	21	56	26	59	-7	10,362
Bluesky	9	18	32	74	17	1,301
YouTube	5	14	81	207	7	891
TikTok	-	1	600	2,148	3	1,083
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>33,332</b>	<b>44,710</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>41,875</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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:

- **Abigail Fillmore Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR)**
- **Arabesques**
- **Buffalo Museum of Science**
- **Buffalo Public Schools**
- **Buffalo Zoo**
- **Cheektowaga-Maryvale Union Free School District**
- **Erie County Historical Commission County Youth Board**
- **Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)**
- **GLYS Western New York**
- **International Institute of Buffalo**
- **Live Well Erie**
- **Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties**
- **New York Library Association (NYLA) Leadership & Management Sections (LAMS)**
- **New York Library Association (NYLA) Youth Services Section (YSS)**
- **New York Genealogical and Biographical Society (NYG&B)**
- **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation**
- **Reinstein Woods Nature Reserve**
- **Western New York Genealogical Society (WNYGS)**
- **Western New York Library Resources Council (WNYLRC) Committees**

## 8. Director Activities

**List of Meetings and Events**  
**Attended by Interim Director Dorinda Darden**  
**February 2026**

DATE	MEETING / EVENT
February 2, 2026	Event - New York Library Association (NYLA) Pre-Advocacy Day in Albany, NY
February 3, 2026	Event - NYLA Library Advocacy Day in Albany, NY
February 4, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
February 4, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
February 4, 2026	Meeting with Judy Fachko
February 5, 2026	Event - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Leaders are Readers School Award for Literacy Assembly Program
February 5, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Bond, Schoeneck & King PLLC Member Robert Patterson
February 5, 2026	Meeting - Personnel Matter
February 5, 2026	Virtual Meeting - New York State Senator April N.M. Baskin
February 6, 2026	Work Session - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition
February 6, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Bostwick Design Partnership
February 6, 2026	Virtual Interview - Assistant Deputy Director Controller
February 6, 2026	Event - 7th Annual Black Doll Exhibit @ Buffalo Museum of Science
February 9, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
February 9, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
February 9, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
February 10, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
February 10, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
February 10, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
February 11, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
February 11, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
February 12, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
February 12, 2026	Radio Interview - Black History Month with Yasmin Young - 93.7 WBLK
February 12, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci and Judy Fachko
February 12, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Executive Committee
February 12, 2026	Event - Diamonds in the Rust Documentary Premiere @ Shea's Buffalo Theatre
February 13, 2026	Meeting - Andrew Maines
February 13, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 17, 2026	Meeting - Judy Fachko

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

February 17, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
February 17, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
February 17, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 18, 2026	Meeting - Aaron Swan
February 18, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
February 18, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
February 18, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
February 18, 2026	Meeting - Michigan Street Preservation Corporation Board
February 19, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
February 19, 2026	Virtual Meeting - Public Library System (PLS) Directors
February 19, 2026	Meeting - Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees Policy Committee
February 20, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino
February 21, 2026	Event - And A Shot Rang Out: A.J. Smitherman & Buffalo's Connection to the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921 Screening
February 23, 2026	Meeting - Jennifer Childs
February 23, 2026	Meeting - Administrative Team
February 24, 2026	Meeting - Chelsey Lonberger
February 24, 2026	Meeting - ErieNet (EN) LDC Board of Directors
February 24, 2026	Meeting - Tracy Palicki
February 25, 2026	Drive to Fleet Maintenance for Bookmobile Pick-Up
February 25, 2026	Meeting - Linda Rizzo
February 25, 2026	Meeting - Heather Gring
February 25, 2026	Meeting - Cait Goodrich
February 25, 2026	Media Interview - Spectrum News
February 25, 2026	Meeting - Angela Marinucci
February 26, 2026	Meeting - Maria Lowe
February 26, 2026	Virtual Meeting - 5/14 Buffalo Massacre Community Memory Coalition Shared Stewardship Kickoff
February 26, 2026	Meeting - Susan Buttaccio
February 27, 2026	Meeting - Dr. Geraldine Bard, Dr. Elizabeth Cappella - Project Flight, and Joy Testa Cinquino
February 27, 2026	Meeting - Joy Testa Cinquino

**Appendices  
A. Monthly Statistics**

**System Programming Statistics:**

Regular/Virtual	Number of Programs	Total Attendance
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	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
<b>Regular*</b>				
Adults	1306	2412	2985	5909
Children 5 and under	1381	2211	6828	10608
Children 6-11	4135	6379	6993	10605
Intergenerational/Combined	6004	9672	9214	15078
Teens	274	454	645	1002
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>13100</b>	<b>21128</b>	<b>26665</b>	<b>43202</b>
<b>Regular Total</b>	<b>13100</b>	<b>21128</b>	<b>26665</b>	<b>43202</b>
<b>Virtual</b>				
<b>Live Virtual</b>				
Adults	4	16	56	143
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	0	0	0	0
Intergenerational/Combined	5	8	145	198
Teens	12	26	12	26
<b>Live Virtual Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Recorded Virtual</b>				
Adults	4	4	280	280
Children 5 and under	0	0	0	0
Children 6-11	2	4	663	1274
Intergenerational/Combined	8	15	1089	2498
Teens	0	0	0	0
<b>Recorded Virtual Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>4052</b>
<b>Virtual Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2245</b>	<b>4419</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13135</b>	<b>21201</b>	<b>28910</b>	<b>47621</b>

\*Regular programs include group programs, one-on-one programs, and self-directed programs (including individual take & make crafts).

### Other Statistics:

Consolidated statistics on library visits, website visits, circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and program attendance and a summary of open hours can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/about-becpl/monthly-statistics>.

Detailed reports on circulation, computer sessions, Wi-Fi usage, and library visits can be found at <https://www.buffalolib.org/monthly-statistics/2026-circulation-public-access-computer-wifi-and-library-visits-detail>.

## B. Contracting Library Activity Report

**North Collins Public Library** – submitted by Library Manager Alice Yoder

Winter is typically a bit quieter at the library, but we still do our best to provide quality programming for all of our community. Following are some of the activities we have enjoyed in the New Year along with a brief peek into some upcoming spring programs:

### Weekly Programs

- *Wednesday Chess Club* continues to be enjoyed by all ages.

- *Friday ABC Story Time*: Where we introduce a letter of the alphabet, sing songs, read stories and prepare a craft all around the letter of the day.

#### Monthly Programs

- *Art Club with Beth*: currently doing watercolor and acrylic.
- *Dungeons and Dragons*: Our faithful teen gamers have been meeting monthly for 3 years.
- Book Clubs: Adults (2), Teens, and Kids.
- Our very successful *Teen Writing Club* is getting ready to publish their book. Each year the members of this group complete a short story that we compile and have bound. In the past, Quality Bindery Services, Inc. in Buffalo has done this for us free of charge! They closed in 2025 so we are experimenting with Barnes and Nobles this year. Come to North Collins and check out this year's book as well as past editions!
- Scavenger Hunts: *Winter Fun*, *I Love Books*, *There are Leprechauns in the Library!*  
The kids LOVE these scavenger hunts!

#### Special Programs

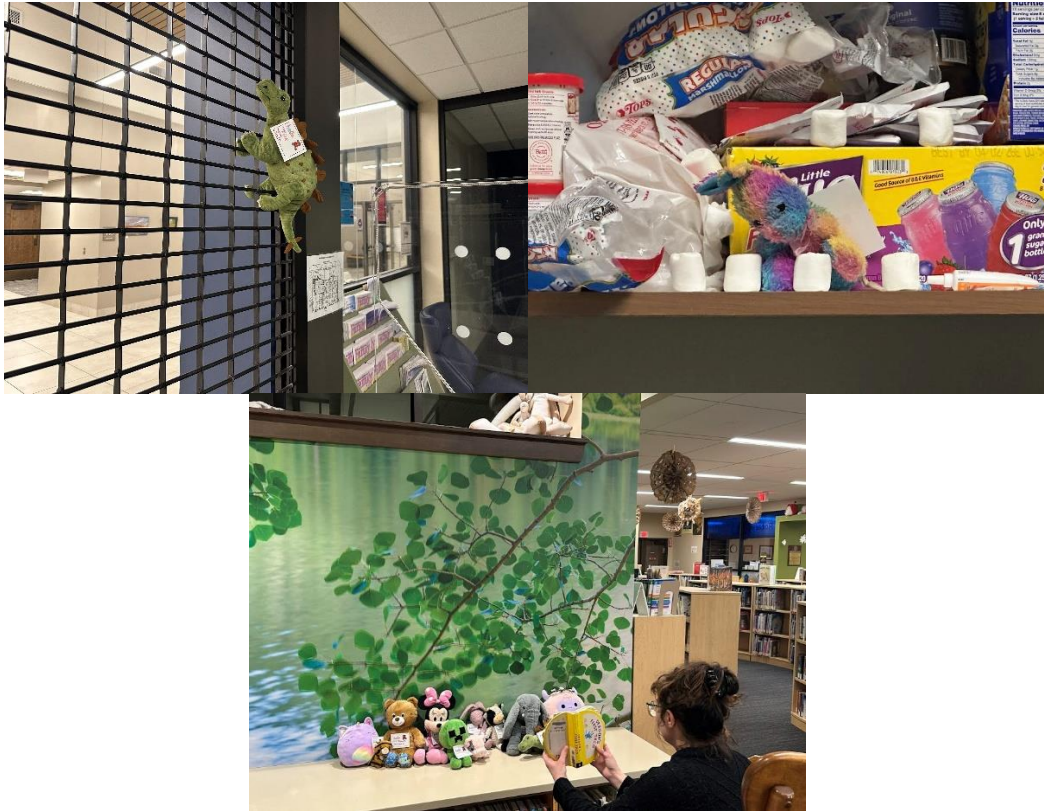
- *Juggling Workshop* with Jacob Harter
- *Adult Craft Night*: decoupage
- Cookie Decorating

#### Upcoming Programs

- *Stitch Together*: We are hoping to gather fiber art lovers to gather monthly at the library to connect, share ideas, and find inspiration.
- *Cooking with Carolyn*: We will be making Easter Egg Cookie Pizza and Easter Bunny Bait.
- *Easter Butter Lamb Workshop*: This is a popular program where we learn about the symbolic tradition of the Easter Butter Lamb and then create our own.

#### West Seneca Public Library – submitted by Library Director Robert Alessi

***Stuffed Animal Sleepovers*** – After a full house last summer, this January our Children's Librarian Trainee **Emily Sieg** and Librarian **Susan Blake** hosted two weekends of *Stuffed Animal Sleepovers*. Both sessions were completely filled to capacity! Kids dropped their stuffed animals off on Friday afternoon and completed a "permission form" for their stuffies to spend the night. They also decorated a blanket for them to use (if they actually went to bed!). On Saturday morning, the kids returned to pick up their friends and enjoy some breakfast while watching a slide show of what their stuffies were up to during the sleepover. They of course spent some quality time reading.



*Photos – Three pictures of activities the stuffed animals did during their sleepover! (Top left) a dinosaur tried to escape. (Top right) a unicorn snuck into the craft closet, (Bottom center) all the stuffed animals enjoyed a story time*

**Seed Swap** – National Seed Swap Day falls on the last Saturday of January, and to celebrate the Friends of the West Seneca Public Library held their 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Seed Swap. For 2 hours on Saturday, January 31, approximately 45 people stopped in and traded seeds, stories, and suggestions on all things gardening.

**FREE Tax Assistance** – Starting on Monday, February 2 and running through Monday, April 13, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is being held by appointment only at the West Seneca Public Library each Monday and Wednesday from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Patrons have made appointments by calling 2-1-1 or by visiting the [freetaxbuffalo.com](http://freetaxbuffalo.com) web site. This program has been so popular that VITA is already looking to double their number of volunteers and capacity for appointments for next tax season in 2027!

**Mario Day** – On March 14, Children’s Librarian Trainee **Emily Sieg** and Librarian **Susan Blake** will host our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Mario Day celebration. Each year has seen around 150-200 people visiting in order to participate in Mario-themed crafts, games, (including both live action and video game versions of Mario Kart), photo ops and more.

**University Express** – Next month will mark the 1-year anniversary of the West Seneca Public Library becoming a partner and host site for events offered through the University Express program and administered by Erie County for anyone age 50 and over. In May

we will begin our third semester of participation and already have 11 different events scheduled on-site between May through July - more than double the number of programs from the first session!

**Neighborhood Forest Tree program for Kids** – This Winter/Spring we are partnering with the Neighborhood Forest organization for the first time (which also aligns perfectly with our participation in the Sustainable Libraries Initiative.) On Wednesday, April 22 (Earth Day) and Thursday, April 23, patrons who signed up via [www.neighborhoodforest.org](http://www.neighborhoodforest.org) will be able to come in to pick up their free tree to plant. We will be distributing over 130 free trees with the help of our Friends of the Library!

**Upcoming Events** – There are plenty of other events coming up at the West Seneca Public Library in the months ahead! There will be a *Spring Carnival* on Friday, April 10, a *Job Fair* with the NYS Department of Labor from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, April 17, a *Friends of the Library Jewelry Sale* fundraiser on Saturday, April 25 from 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., and a visit from West Seneca Town Historian Jim Pace who will deliver his first of three talks in 2026 celebrating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of West Seneca. The first one will be on Monday, April 27 at 6:00 p.m. on “The Senecas of West Seneca”.

Agenda Item G – Report of the Foundation. Trustee Bartholomew summarized the Library Foundation Board meeting that occurred on Wednesday, March 18. She shared that the Board primarily worked on voting for the next slate of officers as presented below.

**President:** Heather Cruz  
**Vice President:** David Zapfel  
**Secretary:** Samantha Nephew  
**Treasurer:** Peter Ruocco

Former President Jack Connors is staying on the Board as a member. Trustee Bartholomew shared that other portions of the meeting discussed fundraising, initiatives, and waiting until the Library Director Search is concluded since the Library Foundation Board works synergistically and at the direction of the Library Director.

Agenda Item H – The Association of Contracting Library Trustees (ACT)/Contracting Library Trustee Report. Martha Buyer shared that the *ACT Annual Workshop* will be held at the Central Library on Saturday, March 21. Following that, the spring ACT meeting will be at the Town of Collins Public Library on Saturday, May 16. The fall meeting date has yet to be determined but will be held at the Isaiás González-Soto Branch Library. Interim Director Darden shared that 82 people have registered for the *ACT Annual Workshop* on Saturday, March 21.

Agenda Item H.1 – Contracting Library Liaison Report(s). Chair El-Behairy announced that she is attempting to fill gaps on the current Contracting Library Liaison list. She encouraged Board members to reach out to her after the meeting to ensure all member libraries have a liaison from the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees.



Agenda Item I – Public Comment. Chair El-Behairy read the Public Comment rules as shared below.

To ensure fairness for those who wish to participate in public comment, the following rules have been adopted:

1. Each speaker’s remarks are limited to three minutes in all cases.
2. Board members shall not respond to any remarks made during the public comment period, though the Board may ask clarifying questions.
3. If the speaker would like a response from the Board, the speaker must leave their name and a method of contact. A written response will be provided as soon as practicable.

A patron of the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library Odessa Hunter explained that she was speaking on behalf of Library Security. She stated that she has witnessed multiple harmful incidents that have occurred at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library and is concerned about the lack of security. Hunter provided her contact information to the Board of Trustees.

Next, patron Tammy Beckman spoke about an incident that occurred at the Central Library. She stated that she has spoken to Library personnel regarding the incident, and provided audio/video documentation. Beckman also spoke about Library Security. Beckman said she reached out to the Board in December regarding her concerns. She ended her comment with stating how important the library was to her when she was growing up, and she would like to see it as a place to de-stress.

Agenda Item J – Unfinished Business.

Agenda Item J.1 – Resolution 2025-45 – Amend Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Anti-Harassment Policy. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2025-45

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees adopted an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Anti-Harassment Policy on April 20, 2017, and the policy has been reviewed and/or amended periodically, most recently on January 16, 2025, and

WHEREAS, Library System Administration has recommended updates to the policy to reflect recent style guide changes, to add reference to offsite and remote workspaces, and to make minor clarifying edits, and

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

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee recommends the attached proposed amended EEO and Anti-Harassment Policy for approval by the full Board, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library adopts the proposed revisions to the Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy to supersede and replace the existing policy last amended January 16, 2025, and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of the approved amended EEO and Anti-Harassment Policy replace the existing policy in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual as Chapter 8, Section 1, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the amended EEO and Anti-Harassment Policy replace the existing policy in each Contract Library's annual agreement, Exhibit G, and be it finally

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

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed amendments. Trustee T. Johnson made the motion to approve. Trustee Craik seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item J.2 – Resolution 2025-49 – Amend Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy & Adopt Harassment Complaint Forms. Deputy Director – Chief Operating Officer Marinucci summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

#### PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2025-49

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

WHEREAS, Library System Administration has recommended updates to reflect recent style guide changes, to add reference to volunteers and offsite and remote workspaces, to update procedures based on current practice, and other minor updates and clarifications, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Discussion ensued regarding proposed amendments. Trustee Berens Bucki noticed that a section had example information pertaining to New York City residents. Deputy Director - Chief Operating Officer Marinucci stated that she would look for local examples. Chair El-Behairy recommended tabling this proposed resolution until the April Board meeting. Trustee Kelly made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Sasiadek seconded, and this was tabled.

Agenda Item J.3 - Resolution 2026-1 - Budget NY State Library Construction Aid Award - Central Library Roof Replacement. Library Administrative Manager Palicki summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

#### PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-1

WHEREAS, on September 19, 2024 the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (Library) Board of Trustees adopted Resolution 2024-19 authorizing the Library Director to submit a \$44,000,000 NYS Public Library Construction Aid Program funding recommendation in the amount of \$1,587,286 for the Central Library Roof Replacement Project, and

WHEREAS, the Central Library project will replace the building's roof and associated materials in preparation for the implementation of a vegetative/green roof and solar array, and

WHEREAS, the estimated grant funding recommendation was reduced to fit within the available funds allocation estimate for the Library system, and

WHEREAS, during the aid review process the NY State Library Division of Library Development staff advised that the Central Library project was expected to receive additional funding resulting from allocations not utilized by other library systems being re-distributed, and

WHEREAS, on December 23, 2025 the Library received an aid award notice for the Central project in the amount of \$1,695,636, which is a \$108,350 increase over the original estimate, and

WHEREAS, a Library Grants budget needs to be established to utilize this funding, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the Library approves establishing a Grant Budget as follows:

**Central Library Roof Replacement Project**

**NYS Library Construction Aid Revenue                      \$1,695,636**

**Project Expense:    \$1,695,636**

Discussion ensued regarding proposed amendments. Trustee Craik made the motion to approve. Trustee Panty seconded, and this was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item J.4 – Resolution 2026-2 – Amend 2026 Budget: New York State Legislature Grant-in-Aid. Library Administrative Manager Palicki summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-2

WHEREAS, on January 23, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (Library) received \$150,000 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 Members Stephen Hawley (District 139), William Conrad (District 140), Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes (District 141), Patrick Chludzinski (District 143), Karen McMahon (District 146), and David DiPietro (District 147), 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 \$150,000 in State Aid, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Library will encourage the receiving libraries to promptly 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
Dist. 139, Newstead Public Library	4204065	\$20,000	\$20,000
Dist. 143, Cheektowaga Public Library	4205210	\$40,000	\$40,000
Dist. 143, Lancaster Public Library	4205420	\$20,000	\$20,000
Dist. 146, Amherst Public Library	4205010	\$10,000	\$10,000
Dist. 147, Marilla Free Library	4204060	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Total Contract Libraries</b>		<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>
		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
Dist. 141 Central Library	4203305	\$30,000	\$30,000
<b>Total Buffalo/System</b>		<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

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, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the above cited contracting libraries.

Discussion ensued regarding proposed amendments. Trustee Panty asked if there are any stipulations to the money or can they use the funds as they see fit. Library Administrative Manager Palicki stated that to her knowledge there are no stipulations. Trustee Kelly noticed several errors. Trustee Panty made the motion to approve as amended. Trustee Craik seconded, and this was approved unanimously as amended.

Agenda Item K – New Business. Trustee Moore stated that when he was entering the Central Library for the Board meeting, he noticed that two youth patrons were turned away from the main entrance. Trustee Moore spoke with Library Security who explained that due to an incident that occurred earlier, no teens were allowed in the library for the remainder of the day. He was concerned with this practice and asked for clarification. Interim Director Darden stated that she will look into the incident and follow-up with Director of Security and Safety Management Aaron Swan.

Trustee Moore thanked Interim Director Darden and then ended his comment with commending his alma mater Howard University for shuttling youth to Buffalo, New York

for their spring break. He wanted to wish them luck during National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) March Madness.

Trustee Barnes asked Interim Director Darden if she is informed of the decisions being made when it comes to turning youth away from the library. Interim Director Darden stated that the library utilizes a Patron Incident Tracking System (PITS) that regularly sends alerts of new incidents.

Discussion ensued regarding Library Security and the Erie County Sheriff presence. Further discussion ensued regarding the teen presence at the Central Library and that not all teens should be turned away due to an incident involving a few.

Agenda Item K.1 – Resolution 2026-3 – Accept & Budget Grant Award – Love Your Library. Library Administrative Manager Palicki summarized the proposed resolution as presented below.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION 2026-3

WHEREAS, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library received notification of the *Love Your Library* grant award from New York State Library, and

WHEREAS, this funding is intended to strengthen and support public library system and member library programs and services, 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 B&ECPL gratefully accepts the award and authorizes amending the 2026 Grants Budget by appropriating grant revenue and expenditures in the amount of \$4,571 to establish the *Love Your Library* Grant, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL approves utilizing these funds to strengthen and support the Youth Outreach services throughout the System, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL authorizes establishing a *Love Your Library* grant budget in the following amounts:

<b>Grant Project Revenue:</b>	<b>\$4,571</b>
<b>Grant Project Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$4,571</b> and be it finally

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

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

Agenda Item L - Adjournment. There being no further business, on a motion by Trustee Panty with a second by Trustee Barnes, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine P. Bartholomew  
Secretary