



Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board
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What is the board's website and contact information?

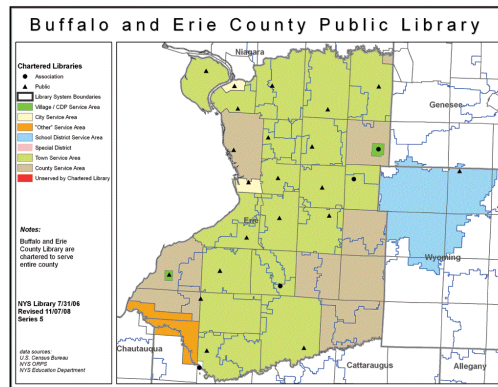
Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
1 Lafayette Square
Buffalo, New York 14203
(716) 858-8900

<http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/board/bylaws.asp>.

What geographic area does it serve?

The Board serves the towns and cities within Erie County. Area libraries include:¹

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
| - Alden | - East Clinton | - Marilla |
| - Angola | - East Delavan | - Merriweather, Frank |
| - Audubon | - Eden | - Newstead |
| - Aurora | - Eggertsville | - Niagara |
| - Boston | - Elma | - North Collins |
| - Central | - Grand Island | - North Park |
| - Clarence | - Hamburg | - Orchard Park |
| - Clearfield | - Kenilworth | - Reinstein, Anna M., |
| - Collins | - Kenmore | - Reinstein, Julia B., |
| - Concord | - Lackawanna | - Riverside |
| - Crane | - Lake Shore | - Tonawanda |
| - Dudley | - Lancaster | - West Seneca |
| | | - Williamsville |



Are there any requirements associated with a board position?

The Board consists of **15** members. The B&ECPL board is a volunteer position. There are however, some requirements an applicant must meet. Eight of the board members must be residents of the city of Buffalo.²

What are the key legal provisions governing the board’s work in city charter, county charter, state laws, etc.

The Board members serve in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 768 of the Laws of the 1953 State of New York, known as “An Act authorizing the consolidation of city and public libraries.”³ The board members are also governed by Article 16 “Other County Boards, Offices, Institutions, and Functions” of the Erie County Administrative Code.⁴

How are the board members and officers chosen?

The members of the Board of Trustees are appointed by the Erie County Executive, subject to the approval of the Erie County Legislature.⁵ Those individuals interested in serving on the board must fill out an application and submit it to the Erie County Executive’s office.⁶ The officers of the Board include a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, who serve for one year or until their successors are elected.⁷ No officer of the Board can be elected for more than three consecutive one-year terms for the same office.⁸



How are the duties of the board members divided?

The Board of trustees is comprised of the following standing committees:

- **Executive Committee:** consists of the Vice Chairman and three other Trustees elected at the annual January meeting. The committee has “all the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees not inconsistent with the law.”⁹

- **Budget and Finance Committee:** Consists of at least three and not more than five Trustees who are appointed by the Chairman, subject to the approval of the board.¹⁰ The committee has the “general management of the finances and investments of the corporation, subject to the control of the Board of Trustees.”¹¹ The committee and the Director prepare a budget request as required by the County and must submit it annually to the Board.¹²
- **Policy Committee:** Consists of at least three and not more than five Trustees who are appointed by the Chairman, subject to the approval of the board. The committee supports the “development of policies that govern and guide the library staff in areas of human resources, circulation of library materials, collection development, access to library facilities and resources, as well as other matters that pertain to the effective operations consistent with the Library’s mission to serve the community.”¹³
- **Building Oversight Committee:** Consists of at least three and not more than five Trustees who are appointed by the Chairman, subject to the approval of the board. The committee acts to ensure that adequate facilities are designated, situated, constructed and maintained to meet the Library’s mission of the service of the community. The Chairman of the Building oversight committee represents the Board on the Building Advisory Committee, as constituted in the Board’s Guidelines and Procedures for Approval of the New Library Construction.¹⁴

How is the library’s budget funded?

The B&ECPL 2009 budget is comprised of:¹⁵

- \$22,171,833- Property Tax for Library Purposes
- \$0- Erie County Interfund Revenue Subsidy
- \$2,023,834- New York State Aid- Operating Budget
- \$1,344,583- Use of Fund Balance
- \$1,162,191- Library Fines, Fees, and other revenues
- \$612,844- Library Grants Budget



**The B&ECPL’s Total Operating Budget and Grants Budget:
\$27,315,285**

How is the budget spent?

Expenses supported by the B&ECPL budget include:¹⁶

- Salaries, wages and employee benefits for the library staff at all libraries.
- Office Supplies for all libraries
- Utilities for all libraries
- Training and education of staff members
- Library Books and media

What is the Library Foundation?

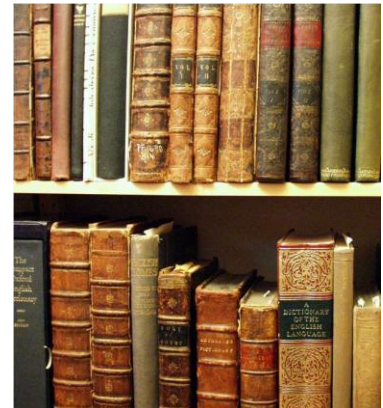
The Library Foundation of Buffalo and Erie County was established in 1991.¹⁷ The Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit corporation which provides financial support to the Buffalo and Erie Public Library.¹⁸ The Foundation furthers the Library’s educational purposes by providing funding for special projects not possible through Erie County funding.¹⁹

The Foundation is run by its own board, separate from the B&ECPL.²⁰

The Foundation can be reached by contacting:
 Anne M. Leary
 Executive Director
 The Library Foundation of Buffalo and Erie County
 1 Lafayette Square
 Buffalo, New York 14203
 (716) 858-6334
learya@buffalolib.org

What are some examples of the B&ECPL board’s projects?

The B&ECPL board plans to convert the existing materials handling, inventory, circulation, and security system operations to a more efficient RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) based system.²¹ This will take place in several phases over the next couple years. “The first phase would convert 51% of the Library’s collection housed in the Central, Buffalo branch, and Amherst Libraries using funds from an Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority (ECFSA) efficiency grant, which would provide the opportunity to use technology to improve public service and achieve staffing savings realized as attrition occurs.”²²



How does the board measure its success?

Through November 2008, use of free public access computers at B&ECPL libraries has increased more than 52% over 2007.²³ The B&ECPL have logged 608,000 sessions at the public computers.²⁴ At the flagship Central Library, year-to-date patron visits have increased by 20%.²⁵

Library patrons are taking advantage of the “request system” more frequently to have needed books and other library materials delivered to the library closest to their home.²⁶ This provides a vital link to information for those individuals who do not own or have access to automobiles. In November of 2008, the number of materials borrowed throughout the Library System has increased approximately 6%, representing more than 390,000 items and a total circulation of over 7 million items.²⁷

Similarly, there has been an increase in the number of downloadable audio books.²⁸ In 2009, a total of 11,409 downloadable audio books were checked out from the B&ECPL.²⁹ This number increased in 2008 as the collection size was increased and the digital media service was expanded to include video and MP3 (iPod compatible) audio books.³⁰ A total of 19,571 downloads were checked out in 2008- over a 70 % increase in usage.³¹ As the popularity of iPods and MP3 players continues, the B&ECPL anticipates that the download services will remain an integral part of the Library’s digital collection.³²

Do the Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries face any funding challenges?

In 2005-2006 the B&ECPL suffered from a significant budget decrease of nearly \$7 million in County support, resulting in 15 libraries closing.³³ Furthermore, the libraries were forced to reduce hours of service at almost every remaining location.³⁴ The decrease in budget also resulted in more than 225 full-time library employees losing their jobs.³⁵ For the first time since 1947, the libraries were forced to take their “Bookmobiles” off the road.³⁶

Reducing state library aid will result in serious service reductions throughout the Library System, affecting all 37 libraries.³⁷ “Through books, media, computers, training programs, educational programs, workforce development programs, networking and resume resources and support, literacy initiatives and general referrals” the libraries provide access to a wealth of services and materials that are critically important during periods of economic uncertainty. The B&ECPLs also provide Buffalo residents with assistance in “job research, help with navigating social service agencies and programs, and continuing education.” Further reduction in state funding threatens the B&ECPLs ability to provide such services to the Buffalo community.³⁸



What community groups are involved in the libraries?

- The B&ECPL board is working with Project Flight to refine a plan for a system-wide literacy initiative.³⁹ The comprehensive plan

consists of county-wide reading, writing and related initiatives correlated with literacy programming and support services.⁴⁰

- The board has currently applied for a grant from the Gates Foundation and ICMA (International City/County Management Association) to fund a portion of their plans directly related to a partnership with the City of Buffalo.⁴¹ The ICMA is teaming up with Gates to offer grants for project partnerships between public libraries and a governmental agency to meet a serious community need.⁴² “The board hopes to secure \$60,000 (the maximum amount) for an initial roll out of services at the Central Library and Niagara Branch Library and to unite the Mayor’s Summer Reading Program and the Library System’s Summer Reading Program for 2009.”⁴³

How does the board report to the public?

Minutes of the board’s meetings can be found on the internet through the B&ECPL’s website at

<http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/board/minutes.asp>.

How can an interested citizen contribute input to the board’s decisions?

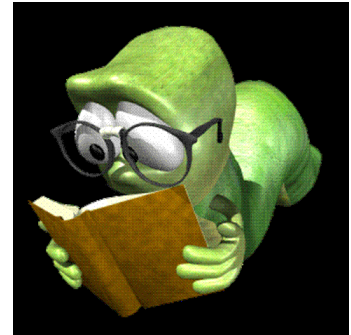
An interested citizen would contact the Director of the B&ECPL at 716-858-8900. The director would then put the citizen in contact with the chairman of the board.⁴⁴

Can the public attend the board’s meetings?

Yes, members of the public are permitted to attend the board’s meetings.⁴⁵ Meetings are held each month.⁴⁶

How would an individual learn more about the B&ECPL board?

Citizens are encouraged to contact the Erie County Executive’s Office at 716-858-8500 and/or the Library Director’s office at 716-858-8900 to learn more about the B&ECPL board.⁴⁷



¹ The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, Library Index 2009
<http://www.buffalolib.org/libraries/index.asp>.

² Caitlin Campbell, Erie County Executive Office. March 2009.

³ Bylaws of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, 2009
<http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/board/bylaws.asp>

⁴ Erie County Administrative Code, Article 16 “Other County Boards, Offices, Institutions & Functions” Section 16.07 “Other Boards.”
<http://www.erie.gov/laws/eccode/code16.asp>.

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- ⁵ Board Bylaws, *supra* note 3.
- ⁶ Campbell *supra* note 2.
- ⁷ Board Bylaws *supra* note 3.
- ⁸ *Id.*
- ⁹ Board Bylaws *supra* note 3.
- ¹⁰ *Id.*
- ¹¹ *Id.*
- ¹² *Id.*
- ¹³ *Id.*
- ¹⁴ Board Bylaws *supra* note 3.
- ¹⁵ The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library: 2009 Adopted Budget, page 1.
http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/2009_BECPL_Adopted_Budget.pdf
- ¹⁶ *Id.*
- ¹⁷ The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library: Library Foundation of Buffalo & Erie County, Inc., 2009. <http://www.buffalolib.org/foundation/index.asp#board>
- ¹⁸ *Id.*
- ¹⁹ *Id.*
- ²⁰ *Id.*
- ²¹ 2009 Adopted Budget *supra* note 15.
- ²² *Id.*
- ²³ New York State Senate Democrats Public Forum: Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System, Bridget Quinn-Carey, December 9, 2009
<http://www.buffalolib.org/featured/BQCTestimony.pdf>.
- ²⁴ *Id.*
- ²⁵ *Id.*
- ²⁶ *Id.*
- ²⁷ *Id.*
- ²⁸ Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board, “Monthly Minutes.” January, 2009 pg. 10.
<http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/board/2009%20Minutes/January2009Minutes.pdf>
- ²⁹ *Id.*
- ³⁰ *Id.*
- ³¹ *Id.*
- ³² *Id.*
- ³³ Buffalo & Erie County Public Library: 2006 Mid-year Budget Hearing- Budget Overview & Issues, Erie County Legislature Finance & Management/Budget Committee, June 27, 2006.
http://www.buffalolib.org/aboutthelibrary/2006_BECPL_Mid_Year_Budget_Review_Co_Legis_Hearings.pdf
- ³⁴ *Id.*
- ³⁵ *Id.*
- ³⁶ *Id.*
- ³⁷ *Id.*
- ³⁸ *Id.*
- ³⁹ Monthly Minutes *supra* note 29 at 9.
- ⁴⁰ *Id.*
- ⁴¹ *Id.*
- ⁴² *Id.*
- ⁴³ *Id.*
- ⁴⁴ Monthly Minutes *supra* note 29 at 9.
- ⁴⁵ *Id.*
- ⁴⁶ Board Bylaws *supra* note 3.
- ⁴⁷ Campbell *supra* note 2.

Partnership for the Public Good
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