



# Library Advisory Board Meeting Thursday, September 28, 2023 Via Zoom

District 1- Vacant	District 4- Howells	District 7- Aoh (President)
District 2- Rosenthal	District 5- Almorsy	At-Large- Murphy (Vice- President)
District 3- Tempestini	District 6- Vacant	At-Large- Groves (Secretary)

## AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Minutes – August 17, 2023**
3. **Public Comment- (limit to 3 minutes)**
4. **Library Reports**
  - a. Staff Reports- None
  - b. Report of the Director
  - c. Review of Financial Report- Deana
  - d. Statistical and Other Reports- John
  - e. Report of District Consultant
5. **Board and Committee Reports**
  - a. Report of County Council Liaison
  - b. Report of Friends of the Library
  - c. Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation
6. **Unfinished Business-**
  - a. Display Policy Update-
7. **New Business**
  - a. 2024 Board Meeting dates, times and location.
8. **Adjournment**
9. **Appendix**
  - a. Announcements
  - b. News Articles

**Blasco Library is getting an armed guard**

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  - b. Report of the Director

#### **Connections-**

**Great Lakes Research & Education Center**-Erie County is partnering with Gannon University to provide the community accessibility to a new Great Lakes Research & Education Center. The center will be housed at the Blasco Library. The new center will include a research facility and exhibits that serve as a laboratory to support research on water quality, water resource sustainability and an education center for local residents as well as visitors to Erie. By partnering with the library, they hope to increase accessibility to the Center and its programming to the community and collaborate on outreach and Citizen Science programming to highlight resources available through the library for the community to learn more and engage in the topics highlighted through the exhibits and research. In addition to the hands on faculty led research lab, exhibits are expected to include a 500-gallon fish tank, a shipwreck exhibit and a butterfly conservatory. See attachment for more information.

**Whale Project kick-off-** the Library will launch the Blue Whale Project on Monday, October 30 from 5:30-7pm at the Iroquois Branch Library! We'll have read-alouds, paper crafts, an interactive whale sound station, a life-sized whale tail, and information about the Blue Whale Project activities that will take place at Erie County Public Library branches from October 30th through March 23rd. This event is sponsored by a grant provide by the National Science Foundation and the STAR Library Network.

**Paul Siple Week & Winter Skywarn with Tom Atkins-** To celebrate Erie native Paul Siple (see attached brochure), meteorologist Tom Atkins hosted a Winter SKYWARN training session in the HIRT auditorium on September 23. This was a comprehensive presentation developed by the National Weather Service covering winter weather in our area, how it develops and how you can be part of reporting it to the Weather Service. He discussed lake effect snow, ice storms wind chill and many other forms of winter weather. It is a free event and open to the public.

#### **Collections-**

**Books and AV RFP-** A request for proposal was posted for vendors interested in becoming the libraries' main source for book and AV materials. The RFP outlines the technical specifications to be considered for acceptance. The RFP came down on Monday and bids were opened Tuesday. We received a total of five vendors. A committee will review the proposals and rate them based on a list of criteria outlined in the RFP. The awarded vendor will go into effect January 1.

#### **Capacity-**

**Staff Development Day-** the Library is scheduled to have an all-employee development day on Monday, October 9. The library will be closed to the public for the day. The focus on this day is employee unity and healing. The library is contacting Antonio Howard, a celebrated artist, public speaker and storyteller as the

keynote for the event. Using the thoughts and inspiration of the staff, Antonio is designing a mural that will be on the staff hallway wall at Blasco. Library staff will spend the afternoon working together to paint the mural. Staff will also take part in on the job training and policy and procedure refreshers. Board members are invited to attend Mr. Howard's presentation. More information will be sent when the itinerary is confirmed.

**Armed Guard at Blasco-** the Blasco Library now has an armed guard onsite throughout all operation hours. The County contracted Valentis, Inc. for these services. The armed guard patrols the Library, the Maritime Museum, the Dept. of Planning and Veteran Affairs. So far, it has been a positive experience for both patrons and staff. Staff have commented on how they feel more at ease knowing there is a trained guard on site. The guard does both interior and exterior security walks throughout the day and are onsite while staff are both entering and exiting the building.

**Policy Committee-** the Library is reinstating an updated policy committee later this fall. This committee will be responsible for reviewing current policies and their relevance to the library along with review of new and expanding policies. The first policy up for review will be Policy -952 Behavior and Conduct Policy. With the introduction of a new guard, they are in need of clear, consistent guidelines to follow. Following the Behavior and Conduct, the committee will create a "Library Display Policy" using examples and content from other Libraries and organizations such as Welcoming America. Once policies are ready for review, they will be placed on agenda for Board advisory.

c. [Review of Financial Report- Deana](#)

See attached

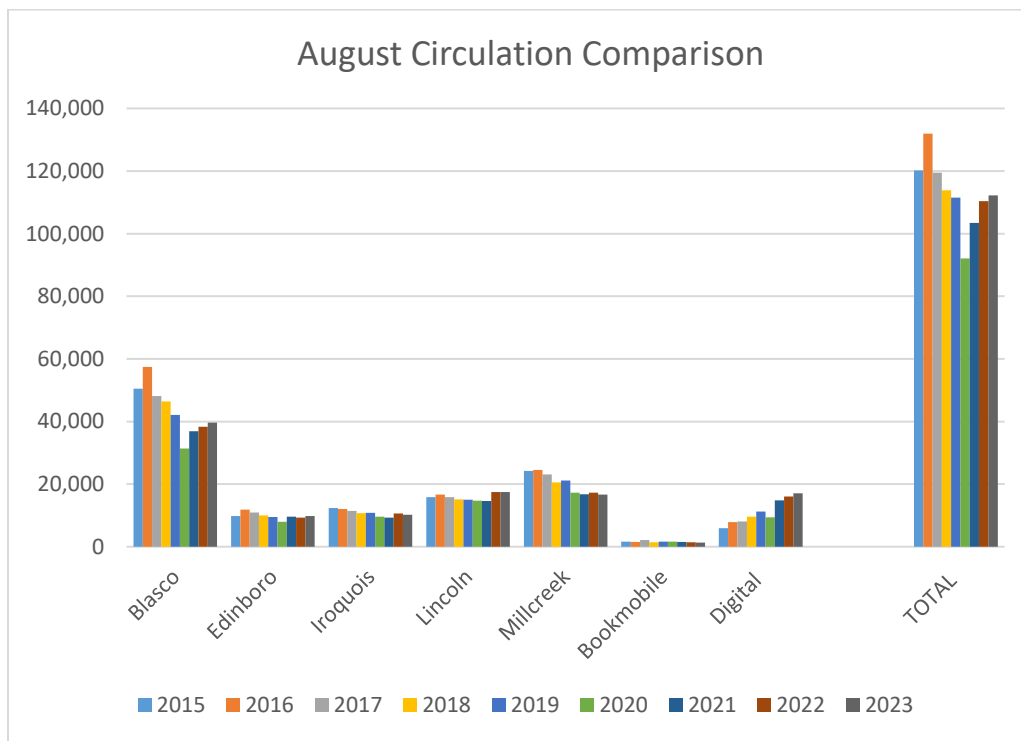


August 2023 Statistics

Numbers Snapshot

- **639** new cards issued (↑2%), including **124** e-cards (↑44%)
- **4,444** WiFi logins (↓19%), **3,759** public PC logins across locations (↓2%)
- **Circulation is** (↑2%) and has exceeded circulation from 2019.

Circulation



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Blasco</b>	50,519	57,436	48,097	46,378	42,130	31,408	36,845	38,277	39,642
<b>Edinboro</b>	9,763	11,857	10,937	9,988	9,492	7,970	9,615	9,263	9,772
<b>Iroquois</b>	12,368	12,049	11,435	10,759	10,831	9,609	9,312	10,631	10,241
<b>Lincoln</b>	15,860	16,702	15,795	15,163	15,032	14,716	14,566	17,455	17,493
<b>Millcreek</b>	24,176	24,529	23,117	20,525	21,135	17,283	16,806	17,316	16,666
<b>Bookmobile</b>	1,606	1,538	2,099	1,452	1,664	1,681	1,481	1,448	1,311
<b>Digital</b>	5,896	7,831	8,038	9,574	11,265	9,408	14,829	15,992	17,098
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120,188</b>	<b>131,942</b>	<b>119,518</b>	<b>113,839</b>	<b>111,549</b>	<b>92,075</b>	<b>103,454</b>	<b>110,382</b>	<b>112,223</b>

**District Services Report as of September 25, 2023**

**Updates for ECPL LAB Report**

**Submitted by Jessica Church, District Consultant**

**State Aid Applications for Libraries**

The member libraries are wrapping up their applications for State Aid. While the specific application process was new to many this year, this general concept falls in line with the purpose of the State Aid program. According to the way in which legislators wrote the laws and fiscal code, State Aid is a reward to libraries for meeting a set of standards. In this current cycle to receive State Aid funding:

- 2022: Gather operational and financial data
- 2023
  - Due in March: Submit data on State survey (annual report);
  - \*Where we're at in the process now\* Due October 1: Apply for State Aid based on the data provided earlier in the year. If a library did not meet all of its standards, it also applies for a waiver (if applicable and if available).
  - Due later this year: Libraries explain how they plan to use their State Aid to enhance library services
- Early 2024: Library receives State Aid funds for meeting standards throughout 2022.

**District Tidbits**

- The Erie & Crawford Library District includes **16 member libraries**:
  - Albion Area Public Library (Erie County)
  - Benson Memorial Library (Titusville, Crawford County)
  - Cambridge Springs Public Library (Crawford County)
  - Cochranon Area Public Library (Crawford County)
  - Corry Public Library (Erie County)
  - Erie County Public Library (includes branches and bookmobile)
  - Linesville Community Public Library (Crawford County)
  - McCord Memorial Library (North East, Erie County)
  - Margaret Shontz Memorial Library (Conneaut Lake, Crawford County)
  - Meadville Public Library (Crawford County)
  - Rice Avenue Community Public Library (Girard, Erie County)
  - Saegertown Area Library (Crawford County)
  - Springboro Public Library (Crawford County)
  - Stone Memorial Library (Crawford County)
  - Union City Public Library (Erie County)
  - Waterford Public Library (Erie County)
- **District Aid** is all State Aid funds designated for serving libraries through collaborative means in a certain area—in our case, Erie & Crawford Counties. Funds go to initiatives such as delivery, covering the salary of the district consultant, and projects that benefit most/all member libraries.
- **County Coordination Aid** is State Aid funds for cooperative projects for libraries in a specific county. In Erie County, these funds help to cover Polaris (the software used to catalog items and check them in/out), certain IT positions and technology equipment, Dial-A-Story, and more. As Erie County does not have a federated system (a formal unit to operate such projects), the funds and initiatives are overseen by the District Library Center.

## 5. Board and Committee Reports

- a. Report of County Council Liaison
- b. Report of Friends of the Library
- c. Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation

## 6. Unfinished Business-

- a. Display Policy Update-

See Director Report for update.

## 7. New Business

- a. 2024 Board Meeting dates, times and location.

## 8. Adjournment

## 9. Appendix

- a. Announcements

-Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 19 at noon via zoom.

-Outreach Manager, Alyssa Johnson will present at the October

-See attachments for Library calendar of events for October.

- b. News Articles

# Blasco Library is getting an armed guard

August 30, 2023 | Erie Times-News (PA)

Author/Byline: A.J. Rao; Erie Times-News | Page: A1 | Section: News

748 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1480, grade level(s): >12

[Read News Document](#)

Blasco Memorial **Library** patrons will see a new feature at the **library** starting Friday: an armed security guard.

Armed with a firearm, a baton and potentially a taser, the guard will conduct roving patrols of the **library** along with the nearby Erie Maritime Museum, the Erie County Department of Planning and Community Development and the Erie Intermodal Transportation Center, which houses the Erie County Department of Veterans Affairs.

The guards will come from Valentis, a Pittsburgh-based security company that Erie County recently hired on a five-year contract. Allied Universal Security Services, which had been providing unarmed security to the same sites, will no longer be providing that service, according to Erie County Public Information Officer Chris Carroll.

Valentis previously handled non-law enforcement security for the four-day Tall Ships Erie

festival in 2022. The company was also awarded a contract in 2022 with the Erie Western Pennsylvania Port Authority to provide armed security, consulting and training to the Port of Erie.

Why armed guards?

Carroll said armed guards will prove a more effective safeguard for employees, patrons and residents.

"The library staff have been forced to call the police or EMS personnel many times on patrons who pose a serious risk to themselves or others," he said in an email to the Erie Times-News. "We will not allow this type of behavior to continue inside our county facilities."

Police officers have been called down to Blasco Memorial Library 33 times so far in 2023, with a case generated from 10 of those incidents, according to the Erie Bureau of Police.

Carroll said the decision to switch to armed security was not triggered by any particular incident. However, he noted that many county employees are often tasked to intervene with "unsheltered citizens suffering from untreated mental illness, drug addiction, or other problems."

"This armed security will give the employees and other citizens the peace of mind that they will be safe in the face of any incident as armed officers are more capable to respond to situations than unarmed," he said.

Carroll said only one guard will be doing roving patrols per shift. He declined to comment on whether the guards will be entering the library or other facilities.

During a Library Advisory Board meeting on Aug. 17, Erie County Public Library Director Karen Pierce referenced a number of recent incidents at the Blasco Memorial Library.

These included a drug overdose and a firing of unknown projectiles in an upstairs bathroom; an individual punching a security guard in the face and another individual throwing a chair at an employee.

Pierce said the library is also seeing a growing number of incidents involving non-patrons, including a homeless man who "camped out in front of the library for several weeks" and threatened people.

"Staff safety is a very big concern for me and to have patrons assaulting our people is scary," she said.

How much is the contract?

The county will pay \$132,288 for the first and second year of the Valentis contract;

\$133,551 for the third year; \$134,485 for the fourth year and \$135,388 for the fifth year.

Carroll said the county helped defer costs by choosing not to fill two vacant positions in the budget. He also said the state will pay 30% of the total costs.

Carroll said the county didn't have a contract with Allied Universal Security Services; rather, the county paid an hourly rate of \$17.15 to staff the building with an unarmed guard.

Pierce said the Valentis contract requires guards to carry a firearm and a baton and to only carry a taser if they are trained on its use.

**Library** Advisory Board VP hopes de-escalation training is in place

Members of the **Library** Advisory Board didn't voice any objections to the new security arrangement during their Aug. 17 meeting.

Board Vice President Kara Murphy told the Times-News that she'd like to get more information about the **library's** history of incidents — stats on how often 911 is called, average response time, etc. — and whether the armed guards will be trained in de-escalation.

"I do know there are security concerns there, so I am not necessarily against (having an armed guard) because safety of staff and patrons should be the No. 1 priority," Murphy said. "But I just want to make sure due diligence has been done and training is in place for de-escalation, sharing of resources, etc. since most of the issues at the **library** seem to be related to mental health."

A.J. Rao can be reached at [arao@gannett.com](mailto:arao@gannett.com). Follow him on X @ETNRao.