



Library Advisory Board Meeting

Monday, August 19, 2024, 12:00pm

Virtual Meeting via zoom

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83819780963?pwd=OFkraXEyamdRL2tEbFNXcDJZOWswZz09>

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

AGENDA

1. ***Call to Order***
2. ***Approval of Minutes – July 15, 2024***
3. ***Public Comment- (limit to 15 minutes)***
4. ***Library Reports***
 - a. Staff Report- none
 - b. Report of the Director- Jessica Stefano
 - c. Review of Financial Report- Deana Cooper
 - d. Statistical and Other Reports- Deana Cooper
 - e. Report of District Consultant-Jessica Church
5. ***Board and Committee Reports***
 - a. Report of County Council Liaison- Councilman Horton
 - b. Report of Friends of the Library- Kathleen Horan
 - c. Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation- Patrick Miller
6. ***Unfinished Business-***
 - a. September In-person meeting time and location
 - b. Board meeting day and time through 2024
7. ***New Business***
 - a. Approve 2025 Library Holiday calendar
8. ***Adjournment***
9. ***Appendix***
 - a. Announcements
 - b. News Articles

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Connections-

Summer Reading Update- Summer Reading Program officially came to an end on Friday, August 16. The prize drawings will happen next week. We hope to share the final statistics at the September meeting.

Summer Outreach Happenings- Outreach Services continued its Summer Reading School Visits to Fort LeBoeuf during meal distributions, rotating Harborcreek Elementary Schools, plus Harding and Grover Cleveland recurring stops. We also attended the Build CDC Community Health Fair at Wayne Equity District and the Our West Bayfront Bayfit event. Outreach hosted 2 group tours at Blasco Library for summer groups.

Housing Authority Week of Fun - the Erie County Public Library hosted a week of programming events for the Housing Authority of the City of Erie. Five days of fun happened the week of August 5 at the Dafmark Creative Arts Program Center at the John E. Horan Garden Apartments Library. Events included a visit from a Therapy Pig and piglets, face painting and glitter tattoos from Taradoodles and a traveling zoo! The Youth Services Librarians were also onsite for crafts, storytimes and to host giant games.

Victorian Princess Event- Using the summer grant funding provided by Erie Insurance, the library has booked the Victorian Princess for 5 hours on August 20 to offer a special series of storytimes for the evening. This will accommodate up to 100 patrons per trip. We are partnering with UPMC to provide health related activities and there will be Naturalists on board to help with wildlife identification. The event is live on our website for patrons to register. <https://events.erielibrary.org/event/12909736>

Edinboro Programming- Edinboro Branch Library (EDB) 2024 programming participation increased in July. Total program participation brought in **391 participants** for the month. This reflects an increase from June 2024 (296 participants), and a significant increase from program participation numbers in July 2023 (334 participants). This increase is likely accounted for through high levels of Storytime turnout, in conjunction with the large turnout for the Tamarack program. The upcoming program calendar includes EDB's offering of three different reading groups/book clubs, the continuation of the popular "Art 4 Wellness" series, and the children's "Building Buddies" program.

Millcreek Branch Library (MCK) had an increase in program participation in July 2024. There were **206** participants across 14 programs (compared to 177 participants across 17 programs in June 2024). This increase reflects both an increase in Storytime attendance by 18 total participants, as well as a very large turnout for the Asbury Woods Nature Tots program. The upcoming program calendar includes MCK's "Garden Club," two

programs related to the ECPL Opioid Grant, and the continuation of “Coloring for Grownups” and “Knit and Crochet Club.”

Capacity-

Personnel Updates-

The library currently has two posted clerk positions for the branches.

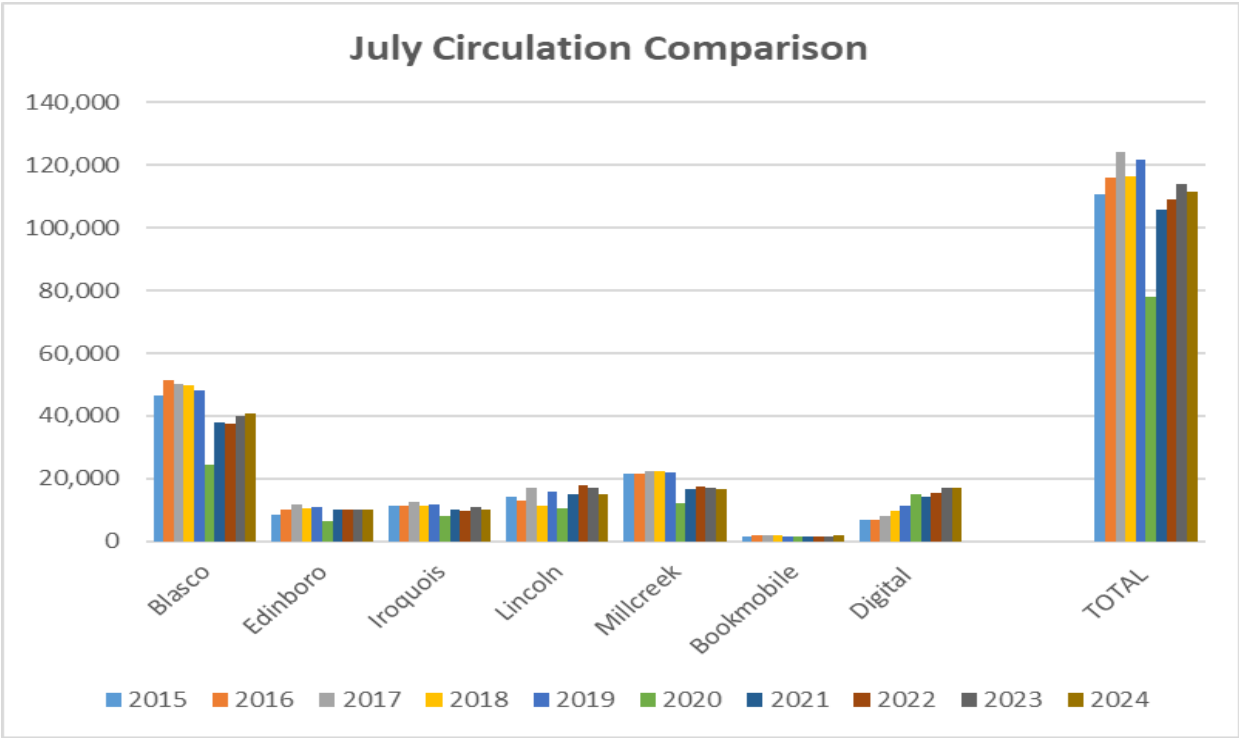
Library Re-Organization-

- c. [Review of Financial Report- Deana Cooper](#)
Report attached
- d. [Statistical and Other Reports- Deana Cooper](#)

July 2024 Statistics

Numbers Snapshot

- **592 new cards issued, including 57 e-cards**
- **4205 WiFi logins, 3681 public PC logins across locations**
- **41,955 July patron visits. ↑ 4774 visits from July 2023**
- **July Library Programming Totals- 168 Programs with 2800 attendees.**



	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Blasco	46,639	51,440	50,219	49,660	48,218	24,347	38,118	37,324	40,167	40,635
Edinboro	8,587	10,196	11,690	10,442	10,981	6,594	10,060	10,090	10,183	9,956
Iroquois	11,246	11,164	12,530	11,216	11,659	7,981	9,991	9,646	10,751	9,967
Lincoln	14,239	12,982	17,268	11,327	15,887	10,373	15,155	17,969	16,879	15,134
Millcreek	21,704	21,590	22,475	22,268	21,797	12,360	16,550	17,295	17,241	16,779
Bookmobile	1,619	1,754	2,014	1,976	1,713	1,477	1,738	1,452	1,581	1,818
Digital	6,765	6,721	8,010	9,562	11,481	14,952	14,340	15,396	17,017	17,135
TOTAL	110,799	115,847	124,206	116,451	121,736	78,084	105,952	109,172	113,819	111,424

e. Report of District Consultant-Jessica Church

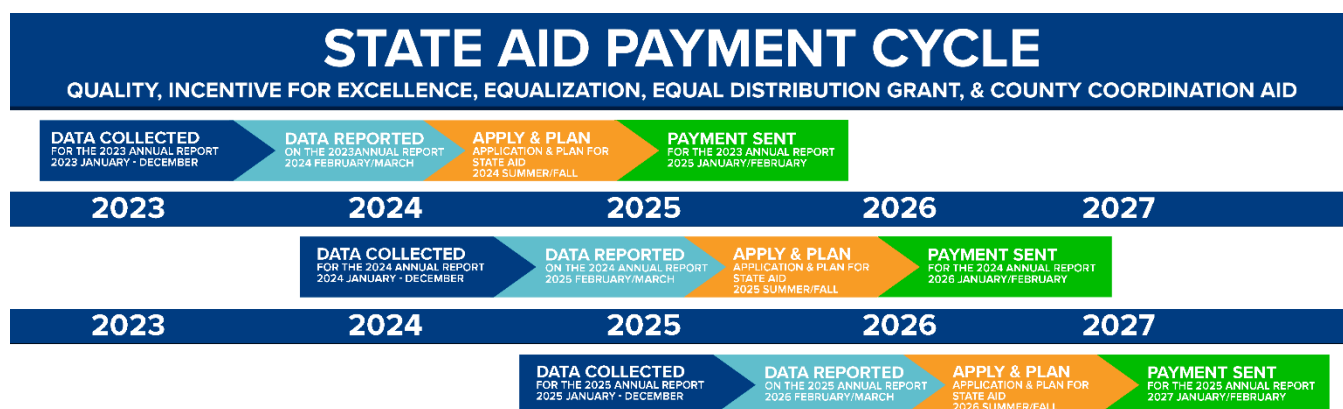
District Services Report as of August 14, 2024

Updates for ECPL LAB Report

Submitted by Jessica Church, District Consultant

State Aid Library Subsidy Applications (SALSA)

Applications for State Aid are currently open for the local library level. Applications use the annual report data submitted earlier in the year to gauge eligibility to receive funds. At this time, Erie County Public Library meets or exceeds their standards, and we foresee no issues in receiving State Aid. If an organization does not meet eligibility standards in certain criteria due to economic hardship—including staffing, continuing education, operating hours, and collection development—the library can submit a request for a waiver.



District Library Center Report

While the SALSAs are open, District Library Centers are also completing their annual services report as district budgets operate on a July – June cycle. The District meets or exceeds expectations in providing services to the member libraries in Erie & Crawford Counties and foresees no issues with maintaining district services.

Interlibrary Loan Shipping - RFP

The District submitted a call for proposals for interlibrary loan shipping services outside of the District counties. Expanding delivery has opened more doors for sharing materials between the counties, and the current means of shipping outside of Erie & Crawford Counties continues to increase at rates that are faster than our budget will sustain. We're excited to explore options that allow our libraries to have more control over interlibrary loan shipping and the costs incurred.

District Member Spotlight: Benson Memorial Library (Titusville)

Website: <https://benzonlibrary.org/>

Since 1904, Benson Memorial Library has served as the community center and facilitator of lifelong learning in the area. Their mission is “to provide the community with open access to quality informational, educational, and cultural resources.” They offer a wide variety of library programs and book clubs including recent and upcoming sessions like Arabic Calligraphy Painting Workshop, Storytime at the Park, Barbie Night, All Aboard the Story Train (on a real train!) and more. Thanks to the rich history of the area, this library is also known for its local history and genealogical resources. **Currently, Benson Memorial Library is in the Target Circle Community Partners pool for voting! If you shop at Target, you can use your votes to support a district member library!**

What else is going on in the District?

We do more than just reports! I tend to highlight those because those are the questions that seem to be on folks’ minds. When we’re not working on reports, there’s lots going on in Erie & Crawford Counties including:

- **Rotating collections and hotspots:** Rotating collections of large print books and Playaway/Wonderbook materials as well as providing hotspots to each library helps to supplement member libraries’ collections and provide patrons with new-to-them offerings every few months.
- **Public Libraries of Erie County:** The seven independent libraries (with eleven total outlets when counting ECPL’s branches/bookmobile) are beginning to review how their libraries work together to serve the patrons of Erie County. While they share Polaris/Leap, the integrated library system for cataloging and loaning materials, each library has their own policies and procedures. The goals include sharing ideas and implementing uniform procedures where possible to provide more cohesive service to patrons.
- **Crawford County Federated Library System:** As a federated system (a different style of consortium than the Public Libraries of Erie County), the nine independent libraries are embarking on revamping their system agreement, state and county aid funding formulas, and strategic plans. As district consultant, I sit in and provides input and experiences (both personal and from other systems in the state). While each of these tasks in their own right are large endeavors, it shows their drive and initiative to ensuring a high level of service to their patrons.
- **SNOE Region:** The District Consultants in Northwest, PA continue to work together behind-the-scenes to share resources and efforts that benefit all of our member libraries. While each of our districts operate in unique fashions, there are several similarities and services where it makes sense (and saves energy) to collaborate. This type of work is not done across the State and has been highlighted in State meetings as a model for district services.
- **Statewide Representation:** In order to ensure that the Northwest is represented, the District Consultants and Crawford’s System Administrator participate in various Statewide committees. I currently sit on the Office of Commonwealth Library’s Statewide Data Workgroup and the Professional Development Workgroup. I also work with the PA Forward initiative and the 2025 Annual Conference with the Pennsylvania Library Association, which comes back to Erie in October 2025.
- **Consulting Services with Member Libraries:** I receive a wide variety of questions and topics to help libraries with from week-to-week. Topics have recently included State reporting, grants, state standards, ILS (Polaris/Koha), PA Forward, card registration legalities, strategic plans, Libby app updates, Statewide Library Card Program (AccessPA), and more!

5. Board and Committee Reports

- a. Report of County Council Liaison- Councilman Horton
- b. Report of Friends of the Library- Kathleen Horan
- c. Report of Erie Regional Library Foundation- Patrick Miller

6. Unfinished Business-

- a. September In-person meeting time and location

Wednesday, 9:00am at Lincoln

- b. Board meeting day and time through 2024

3rd Wednesday of the month at 9:00am via zoom

7. New Business

- a. Approve 2025 Library Holiday calendar

The majority of County employees will celebrate **HOLIDAYS** for the year **2025** on the following dates:

DESIGNATED COUNTY HOLIDAY

DATE CELEBRATED IN 2024

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| • NEW YEAR’S DAY | Monday, January 1 |
| • MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY | Monday, January 20 |
| • PRESIDENT’S DAY | Monday, February 17 |
| • GOOD FRIDAY | Friday, April 18 |
| • EASTER SUNDAY | Sunday, April 20 |
| • MEMORIAL DAY | Monday, May 26 |
| • FLAG DAY (Libraries are open) | Friday, June 13 |
| • INDEPENDENCE DAY | Friday, July 4 |
| • LABOR DAY | Monday, September 1 |
| • STAFF TRAINING DAY | Monday, October 13 |
| • VETERAN’S DAY | Tuesday, November 11 |
| • THANKSGIVING EVE (close at 5pm) | Wednesday, November 26 |
| • THANKSGIVING DAY | Thursday, November 27 |
| • DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING DAY | Friday, November 28 |
| • CHRISTMAS EVE (close at 5pm) | Wednesday, December 24 |
| • CHRISTMAS DAY | Thursday, December 25 |

- DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS Friday, December 26
- NEW YEAR'S EVE (Close at 5pm) Wednesday, December 31
- EMPLOYEE'S BIRTHDAY Floating holiday; must be used 14 days before or after birthday

***Exceptions:** Certain bargaining unit employees, or certain employees in 24-hour, 7-day-per-week-operations, may celebrate a holiday on a different date than indicated above based on applicable collective bargaining agreements.

NOTE: All non-bargaining permanent full-time and permanent part-time employees are entitled to holiday pay immediately upon hire (provided they are in compensable status at least a 1/2 day prior to the holiday and at least a 1/2 day after the holiday). Bargaining employees will be eligible based on applicable collective bargaining agreements. Per-diem, on-call and temporary status employees are not entitled to holiday pay.

The Blasco Memorial Library is open on Sundays from 1-5pm, with the following exceptions:

August 31
November 30
December 28

8. Adjournment

9. Appendix

a. Announcements

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, September 18 at 9:00am in-person at the Lincoln Branch.

b. News Articles

County files preliminary objections to Gannon suit

August 12, 2024 | Erie Times-News (PA)

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

In June, a group of citizens sued Erie County Executive Brenton Davis for allowing Gannon University to lease space inside the county's main public library and begin construction of a new research and education center.

On Friday, Erie County Solicitor Bill Speros, on behalf of Davis, pushed back on the lawsuit.

In a set of preliminary objections filed in the Erie County Court of Common Pleas, Speros stated that the plaintiffs, a protest group called Keep Our Library Public, focused their complaint on Davis, who negotiated the lease, while neglecting to sue Erie County Council or Gannon.

Speros stated that County Council authorized the lease via resolution and that Gannon is the lease holder, making them "indispensable parties" to the litigation. He argued they should have been included in the lawsuit because their interests will be directly affected by a potential court ruling.

While the lawsuit names Davis and Erie County as defendants, Speros argued the plaintiff's failure to join County Council and Gannon as a party to their complaint should be grounds for dismissal.

"When declaratory relief is sought, all persons shall be made parties who have or claim any interest which would be affected by the declaration," Speros stated, citing state law.

"No declaration shall prejudice the rights of persons not parties to the proceeding."

Speros added, "Pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure, a party may file preliminary objections for a plaintiff's failure to join an indispensable party."

Speros notified the plaintiffs to file a written response to the preliminary objections on or before Aug. 24.

The plaintiffs did not have an immediate comment to the Erie Times-News. The group is represented by Pittsburgh-based law firm Strassburger McKenna Gutnick and Gefsky.

Why are County Council and Gannon 'indispensable parties?'

Speros stated that a party is considered "indispensable" if his or her rights are so directly connected with litigation that a decree or order would impair their rights

In his first preliminary objection, Speros stated that the plaintiffs are requesting the court to nullify council's Oct. 17 resolution that authorized the lease. If the court granted this request and declared council's actions invalid, it would affect council's interests as a governing body acting within its authority, according to Speros.

In his second preliminary objection, Speros stated that Gannon, by virtue of the lease, holds a leasehold interest.

"Because plaintiffs seek to void the lease, Gannon, as the owner of a property interest, possesses a direct and essential interest that will necessarily be affected by any order or declaration of this court, and is therefore an indispensable party," Speros stated.

What's the lawsuit about?

Gannon seeks to build the Great Lakes Education and Research Center in the Blasco Memorial Library.

The 3,280-square-foot center — a part of Gannon's \$24 million water sustainability initiative called Project NePTWNE — is to be located on the eastern wing of the library's first floor and comprise of hands-on exhibits, a NOAA Science on a Sphere and a research and wet lab.

The lease has Gannon paying a flat rent of \$7 a square foot for an initial 25-year period.

Opponents have argued the lease is an affront to the library, contending it gives away space from a vital public asset to a private, religiously affiliated university.

Keep Our Library Public, a citizen-led protest group that staged several demonstrations against the lease, filed a lawsuit on June 27, seeking a declaratory judgement to void the lease. The lawsuit contains three primary reasons.

Firstly, it alleges the lease violates the intended purpose of the Blasco Memorial Library property, located at 160 E. Front St. The suit claims the property was specifically donated to the county for use as a public library — not to be leased out to a private institution like Gannon.

Davis, the suit claims, violated the Pennsylvania's Dedicated or Donated Property Act, when he executed the

lease without first seeking a court order permitting a modification for a change in use of the donated property.

Secondly, the lawsuit alleges that Davis violated the Erie County Administrative Code by negotiating lease terms that are not favorable to Erie County taxpayers. The suit claims Davis executed the lease without obtaining any other proposals or offers and without any market value analysis.

Thirdly, the lawsuit alleges that Davis breached his fiduciary duty, that he "negligently or intentionally mishandled" donated property in negotiating and executing the lease.

A.J. Rao can be reached at arao@gannett.com. Follow him on X @ETNRao.

Gannon gets feedback about Great Lakes center

August 3, 2024 | Erie Times-News (PA)

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

Gannon University's proposed Great Lakes Education and Research Center, which is slated to be built in Blasco Memorial Library in late fall and open in early 2025, has left many Erie-area residents concerned.

Will tourists flood the library? Will it be noisier? Will there be a fish odor?

Gannon on Wednesday held two public sessions at the library's H.O. Hirt Auditorium to allay those concerns and hear feedback from residents.

Sarah Ewing, provost and vice president for student experience at Gannon, sat on the session's panel, along with Martin Busser, architect with Pittsburgh-based Indovina Associates Architects, and Erie County Public Library Director Jessica Stefano.

Here are some key takeaways.

Center will have three main areas — all accessible to the public

The proposed 3,280-square-foot center — a part of Gannon's \$24 million water sustainability initiative called Project NePTWNE — is slated for the eastern wing of the library's first floor.

NePTWNE stands for Nano & Polymer Technology for Water and Neural Networks in Erie and is pronounced "Neptune" after the Roman god of freshwater and the seas.

The center will comprise of three main areas: an interactive exhibit space, a NOAA Science on a Sphere and a research and wet lab, all of which will be accessible to the public at no cost.

Busser said the interactive exhibit space will include items like terrariums, taxidermy, an interactive floor display and a contoured map on a table that can show real-time data of Lake Erie, such as water temperatures and algae growth.

The NOAA sphere, he said, can display more than 600 programs to classes or the public. The research and wet lab can also be used by the public for research opportunities and water sample collection.

Busser said the center will occupy space that was formerly private office space for library staff; the computer lab and collaboratory space, all of which has been relocated.

Panel addresses noise, odor, other concerns

Busser said the NOAA sphere exhibit will have its own space behind a glass door and be "acoustically separated" from the rest of the center. The interactive exhibit space, he said, will use cone-type acoustic devices to prevent sound from traveling beyond the room.

Students on class trips, instead of using the main library entrance and creating traffic, can enter the center through a second "private entrance" on the eastern end of Blasco, he said.

Ewing said the center is designed to house 18-20 people maximum in each area, not hundreds of people.

Busser said a separate HVAC system will be used for the research and wet lab and the NOAA sphere area, preventing odors from spreading throughout the library. Users of the wet lab, he added, will enter through the private entrance, bypassing the library and preventing any contamination.

Busser said the center will include exhibits in Braille and multiple languages and have hearing devices for people with hearing disabilities.

A "separation wall" will be built from the floor to the ceiling to prevent noise and dust from disrupting library operations during construction, Busser said.

Stefano addressed the increased patronage.

"Our ability to bring more people into the building is something that we want," she said. "I hope that we outgrow our parking lot and have incredible data to be able to make a case for having more parking."

Gannon says center aligns with library's mission

While attendees praised the center's design, they argued against its location, contending it takes away space from the county's main public library and gives it to a private, religiously affiliated university for an initial 25-year lease.

"It's a beautiful project but it does not belong in a library," said Erie resident Ruth Swaney.

"I think the library belongs to the people. It's a people's space," added Erie resident Issy Lawrie.

Project NePTWNE Director Sherri Mason, who was unable to attend Wednesday's sessions but submitted a short video presentation, said the center's location in the library was "central to the importance of what the center represents."

"It is an education and research center that is connected to the water and is about water quality and water research," she said. "(Library) patrons can immediately access the center and learn about Lake Erie, the Great Lakes and how water connects us all to each other."

Stefano added that the library and Gannon have "parallel missions."

"Libraries are really in a position where we have to do what we can to make ourselves relevant to the community, building partnerships so we have allies," she said.

"This is an opportunity for us to work together, serve the mission of providing literacy opportunities to our

community. This gives us an opportunity to do some of those things and partner with people who already have the expertise to bring us things that we don't currently have in the library."

Skepticism continues

Anna McCartney, an Erie resident, said the session did nothing to quell her disappointment that Gannon will pay a low rent — \$7 a square foot for 3,280-square feet — and also get free access to several of the library's common rooms like the auditorium and Admiral Room.

"The fact that they're getting all these spaces, plus a private entrance, at such a low rent — it's unbelievable," she said.

Mary Rennie, a former director of the Erie County Public Library and a vocal critic of the center's place in the library, said Gannon could instead host a temporary display, something within the library "without necessarily inhabiting the library."

"That would be my best compromise situation. Keep the research lab in a university where research labs belong," she said.

Keep Our Library Public, a citizen-led protest group that staged several demonstrations against the center's lease at Blasco, filed a lawsuit in June against Erie County and Erie County Executive Brenton Davis, who negotiated the lease with Gannon.

Rennie, a member of the protest group, said the county has until Aug. 6 to respond to the lawsuit.

"I would say that if demolition is scheduled, we could be looking at filing an injunction," she said.

Additional feedback can be submitted to Gannon at gannon.edu.

A.J. Rao can be reached at arao@gannett.com. Follow him on X @ETNRao.

Davis said Gannon police 'will' patrol library under lease. County now says no plans set

July 24, 2024 | Erie Times-News: Web Edition Articles (PA)

Author/Byline: Ed Palattella, Erie Times-News | Section: News

Erie County Executive Brenton Davis made a pledge about public safety as he lobbied for the deal for Gannon University to build a water research center at the county's main public library on Erie's bayfront.

In a post on the Erie Times-News' Facebook page to defend the center, Davis said an added benefit of the lease agreement would be that the Gannon police department would patrol the Raymond Blasco, M.D., Memorial Library, on East Front Street.

"Gannon will be adding Blasco to their Police presence patrol as a part of this deal adding an additional level of security and a police force with actual arrest powers," Davis wrote in the post, on March 21. "This has potential to allow the county to further assess and potentially downgrade from armed security in time saving taxpayers more money."

Davis in the post was referring to his decision in 2023 to place private armed security guards at Blasco under a five-year contract with Valentis, a Pittsburgh-based firm.

Despite Davis promising that Gannon police "will be adding" Blasco to their jurisdiction, such a plan is far from final.

Gannon is more circumspect about the expanded jurisdiction, and the Davis administration now says no plans are confirmed.

And even if Gannon and Davis pursue a relationship between Blasco and the university's police force, with 12 full-time officers, the plan would still have to get judicial approval — a critical step that Davis did not mention in his post but that Gannon said it recognizes would have to occur.

"The idea of having Gannon police officers check on our lab employees at Blasco Library was something we briefly discussed early on with county officials, and it has not been revisited in many months," a spokesman for Gannon, Doug Oathout, told the Erie Times-News on July 16.

"This still needs to be assessed," Oathout said. "If we explore it, we understand there would be a process involved."

Oathout confirmed that the process involves court approval.

The Erie Times-News attempted to discuss the police proposal with Davis in person, but he declined to be interviewed through his spokesman, Chris Carroll, who said Davis "doesn't see a sit-down interview as necessary." Davis asked that the Times-News send him questions.

The Times-News, in an email, asked Davis if he could let the newspaper "know when Gannon police will start patrolling the Blasco Library, and what processes must occur for those patrols to come about."

Davis responded with a statement on July 10: "Currently, there are no confirmed plans for Gannon police to start patrolling the Blasco Library. For now, the Blasco Library will continue to use Valentis armed security to ensure the safety and security of our patrons and staff."

In his Facebook post, Davis wrote about why the county hired Valentis' security guards — which he said the Gannon police would eventually replace.

"Last year," Davis wrote, "Blasco had several dozen serious police incidents in which staff and others were harmed, had a serious altercation, issue or other incidents involving mental health, substance abuse, or of a sexual nature."

"These incidents do not make for a safe environment for the public or our employees," he wrote. "There was a significant cost to this service and a necessary one."

Gannon's Project NePTWNE and Blasco Library

The Gannon project at the library, called the Great Lakes Research and Education Center, would take up 3,280-square-feet of the 90,000-square-foot building. The project is part of Gannon's multi-phased \$24 million water quality initiative called Project NePTWNE, which is named after the Roman god of freshwater and the sea. Project NePTWNE stands for Nano & Polymer Technology for Water and Neural-networks in Erie.

The project has generated dissent. Critics say a public library is an inappropriate spot for the center and that the terms of the lease agreement — \$7 a square foot for an initial 25-year period — is too favorable to Gannon.

A legal challenge came on June 27. Keep Our Library Public, a citizen-led protest group, sued Davis in Erie County Common Pleas Court and asked a judge to void the lease. The suit is pending, and how it will affect construction of the project is unclear.

Gannon anticipates construction will begin in late fall, with a projected opening in early 2025. A lawsuit could complicate the timeline.

Gannon is holding sessions to get public input on the project at the library, the university said on July 19.

The sessions are scheduled on July 31 at the H.O. Hirt Auditorium in the Blasco Library complex. The first session runs from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the second from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Gannon is also accepting feedback online, from July 31 through Aug. 4, at gannon.edu/water. The survey will be active on July 31, Gannon said.

Gannon would have to go to court to expand police boundaries

The lawsuit over the lease has already pulled the water center project into court. It would end up in court again if Davis and Gannon decide to go ahead with a plan to have Gannon's police officers patrol Blasco Library.

The library is about a mile from Gannon's downtown Erie campus and outside the current jurisdiction of the Gannon police force, according to court records.

State law allows a nonprofit corporation such as Gannon that maintains buildings and grounds open to the public to apply to have a police force. But court orders are required to approve the force and its jurisdiction and to appoint officers.

Gannon got court approval for its police force in 2000, but not without questions about its jurisdictional boundaries.

Gannon applied for approval for a police force to have authority from Liberty Street to the west, Parade Street to the east, 12th Street to the south and Front Street to the north. The university said its intent was to have its officers handle summary offenses, such as underage drinking, and leave more serious cases to the Erie police.

At a hearing in April 2000, then-Erie County Judge Fred P. Anthony reduced the eastern boundary of the Gannon police's jurisdiction from Parade Street to French Street. He also listened to concerns from the city and the Erie police union about the boundaries still being too broad and not limited to Gannon's campus.

Anthony affirmed the final boundaries following a hearing in June 2000. They are Liberty Street to the west, Parade Street to the east, 12th Street to the south and Front Street to the north.

Under the agreement Anthony signed, Gannon's police officers are authorized to investigate low-level crimes — described as summaries and third-degree misdemeanors — in the "immediate and adjacent vicinity" of Gannon's campus, according to the court order. The deal called for Gannon police to focus on the university's sororities, fraternities, any off-campus housing, Gannon's property and Gannon students.

The jurisdictional boundaries remain in effect, with an exception, according to court records. In April 2008, then-Erie County Judge Ernest J. DiSantis Jr. expanded the jurisdiction to include the Bayfront Convention Center and the Sassafra Street Pier, where the convention center is located.

However, according to the order, any Gannon police officer "shall exercise his or her police powers on the

Sassafras Street Pier or in the Bayfront Convention Center only at an event or function sponsored by Gannon University."

Gannon would have to get a similar exception if it wants to include the Blasco Library in its police department's jurisdiction.

The library is located at 160 E. Front Street, just west of Holland Street, the next street east of French Street.

French Street stops at East Second Street in the area of the east bayfront. But if French Street extended to Front Street, the Blasco Library would be just east of French Street and thus outside the current boundaries for the Gannon force.

Contact Ed Palattella at epalattella@timesnews.com or 814-870-1813. Follow him on X @ETNpalattella.