

Finances

Our accountants do not recommend any budget amendments for 2025, so that's one less thing to do for our December meeting. I project us to be under budget and to have used our unassigned fund balance about 50,000-60,000 less than we had originally planned.

Personnel

I echo Kimberly in her report welcoming Kayla Luckadoo to the library, and welcoming back Andrea Tennyson as a substitute. Our last remaining open regular position is set to be filled with Becky Olds starting later today.

All paperwork was signed with the United Way for us to be officially on board with the MI Tri-Share Child Care program. Two BDL staff have indicated an interest so far in using this program.

The last week of November is always a favorite as we evaluate all the entries in our [Employee and Volunteer Recognition Program](#). This year we had 78 submissions for 29 individuals. 26 out of 40 BDL staff were nominated, as were 3 volunteers. There was so much good to acknowledge this year in all of our wonderful colleagues: 22 awards were given out (2 volunteers and 20 staff), totaling \$7,500. Letters went out this week and awards will be given on the 19th.

Facilities

Regarding last month's announcement of the Carnegie Foundation's grant to the Bronson Branch Library, please see [the cute video](#) that Megan and Steve put out.

At the Sherwood Branch, there was a break-in on November 24. It appears that the perpetrator sliced open a screen then opened a window they must have unlocked on the sly prior. \$10 cash, a laptop, and the CPU from inside a desktop computer were stolen. The case of the computer was defaced. Unfortunately. A camera system malfunction prevented us from getting any video of the event.

After receiving approvals at the last Board meeting, I signed the contract with Teachout Security for the Coldwater Branch and ordered the iPad and extra sets of keys they requested. We are still on track for starting that service on Monday, January 5th.

After doing such a nice job with our October staff training, we have hired local firm BHS Tactics and Consulting to work with us on evaluating our premises and updating our emergency manual. They have already started visiting all locations and providing us with

suggestions for improvement. One suggestion already made is make it so our camera feeds at all branches could be monitored by all library staff. Crowdsourcing, in effect, a monitoring service that we couldn't otherwise afford. This recommendation, along with the recent incident at the Sherwood Branch, is why you'll find a purchasing request in this packet to update the branch camera systems.

Christina and I did a walkthrough with a competitive bid for janitorial services at the Coldwater Branch. We also had estimates provided by our HVAC contract, Aker, to add heating and cooling to the Branch Manager's office and improve the chilly situation in the basement break room, two areas the Building Committee recommended we address. The estimates for these HVAC improvements were well under my approval limit, so the green light has been given.

The cold weather has taken a bit of a toll on the bookmobile. We had to cancel a couple stops this week after the vehicle wouldn't start and exhibited some very strange other behaviors as well. The Stoops mobile service came out, and their best guess was that it was simply the battery being affected by the cold and fully depleting it. They recommend starting it for a while daily in cold weather, and purchasing a portable jump kit big enough for the vehicle. We will order the same one they used on us!

Meetings / Training

Bronson Friends of the Library, County Commissioners, Coldwater Advisory Board, Library of Michigan Directors, Introduction to the Sustainable Libraries Initiative webinar

Submitted by John Rucker

Technical Services

As we wrap up the year, I am winding down the annual collection maintenance review. The last step is running multiple reports to share with staff regarding lost, missing, or other unique statuses of our items. At the end of November, a total of 627 items were marked as lost or missing, and our collection contained 110,838 items. If you divide the lost and missing items by the total collection size, we can calculate our shrinkage rate for 2025 at 0.00056, or 0.056%.

For context, public libraries typically aim to keep annual shrinkage between 1-2%. Our rate is significantly lower. I believe this is an indicator of both an effective materials management process and the respect our community shows for shared resources. We often say our Branch County patrons are great, and we mean it. They are excellent at returning what they borrow (and not walking off with the rest!).

In addition, our monthly wand sessions, which use RFID technology, continue to be effective. They consistently help us recover materials that might otherwise be lost to the shelves without the technology.

Book Vendors

As mentioned in my October report, we lost our main book vendor, Baker & Taylor, when they suddenly announced their closure. This caused a brief disruption in the timely arrival of new materials at BDL. Our secondary vendor, Ingram, now serving as our primary vendor, took on more than two thousand additional accounts. This did lead to delays and challenges for their existing customers.

However, Ingram is actively scaling up by opening additional warehouses and hiring more staff to meet increased demand. Our late fall orders have begun arriving, and orders placed within the last two weeks are already in the committed stage. I can clearly see things are moving more quickly. We shared an update with patrons in November to inform them of the situation and thanked them for their patience. Ingram shared that they hope to return to "normal" by the end of the first quarter in 2026.

In the meantime, staff have met with Barnes & Noble to learn more about purchasing through their online portal. We are keeping our eyes and ears open for additional vendor options for 2026.

Human Resources

I was happy to welcome Kayla Luckadoo to the BDL team at the end of November. She brings extensive experience working with children and serving our community, and she will be joining the Public Services Department at the Coldwater Branch.

Also, a big welcome back to Andrea Tennyson. Andrea previously worked for BDL in Union Twp. Public Services Clerk, and we are happy to have her return in a more casual role. She will be working with the Director of Public Services to cover front-line staff positions when the need arises.

Programming

Books on Tap had an impressive turnout at the November meeting held at Trainwreck Grill and Ale House. It was our largest gathering to date with 16 attendees. The group discussed *The Pirate's Wife: The Remarkable True Story of Sarah Kidd*, our single non-fiction selection for the year. Special thanks to Jessica Tefft for filling in for me so that I could attend my daughter's sporting event. I am very happy to see that after four years, this mixed-genre book club has a dedicated member group. It has changed names, locations, days, and multiple times over the years. My two original members still attend, and more are adding in every meeting. It is a great group that enjoys the books, food, and company at Trainwreck once a month. Of course, there is always room for more! The next meeting for Books on Tap is Wednesday, December 17, at 6:00 pm. We will be reading *Small Things Like These* by Claire Keegan. It is a quick read with 128 pages. Copies are available at the Coldwater Branch!

Books on Tap is one of our great book clubs for adults and teens. You can see our full list on our website (Branchdistrictlibrary.org/bookclubs) or in our Event Guide.

Meetings

Kiwanis Club of Coldwater

Ask Me Anything Zoom Hour with Ingram

BHS Tatics & Consulting

Submitted:

Kimberly Feltner

- The 2026 One Book One County book is *The Gales of November: The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald* by John U. Bacon. The book is described as “a recent, definitive account of the 1975 sinking of the freighter, focusing on the lives of the 29 crew members and the emotional aftermath for their families, while also exploring the likely causes of the disaster, such as rogue waves, structural fatigue, and potential human error.” The book will be available at all branches in February and discussions will take place in March.
- Attended a program meeting to discuss March-May 2026 programs and what potential SRP programs look like. It looks like there’s going to be A LOT of really great and dynamic Dino programs happening!
- Take Your Child to Library Day is being planned and it’s going to be SO much fun! A black light scavenger hunt at all seven locations will bring some fun and enjoyment to an otherwise cold and dreary January. The hunt will culminate in a fun celebration at each branch on Feb 6th.

