Library Board of Trustees PR Committee Meeting

September 6, 2018       Government Center, Room 123-C

In attendance
Fran Millhouser, Sheila Janega, Jane Miscavage, Brian Engler, Priscille Dando, Suzanne Levy, Cheryl Lee, Mary Mulrenan, Nancy Gravatt, and Christine Jones.

Minutes
Committee Chair Millhouser opened the meeting at 10 a.m. with introductions.

Chair Millhouser recommended flipping the Committee’s stated purpose to read “To work on public support and funding for the Library and ensure an accurate record of Library Board minutes.” The recommendation passed unanimously.

The Activity description was confirmed as written on the agenda: “Provide powerful information to the Library Trustees to communicate (through “elevator” talks, etc.) to their communities and elected officials on the importance of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL). Review the minutes of each Board meeting to ensure their accuracy.”

After discussion, the committee voted to recommend changing its name to Outreach and Communications. Chair Millhouser will recommend the change to the full Board for approval.

Old business involved discussion about how to ensure that the community and elected officials are aware of FCPL’s materials and services as well as how to communicate most effectively with elected officials. Chair Millhouser will ask all Trustees to:

- Sign up for FCPL e-newsletters; use the quarterly talking points and e-newsletters to gather positive news about FCPL to send to supervisors;
- Ask their Supervisor for a contact in her/his office;
- Email the identified contact in the Supervisor’s office once a month with positive news about FCPL;
- Identify appropriate communication resources for their community (i.e. newspapers, blogs, listservs) to effectively communicate with community members; and
- Occasionally take publicity materials to their Supervisors’ offices.

The committee held a discussion about how and when to respond to misinformation in the media. The Committee requested that Chair Smolen or FCPL staff provide the Trustees with timely responses to future issues, including the Board’s unified message and links to any appropriate information. Identification of community advocates willing to address misinformation would be helpful as well.

The committee also discussed how to honor/acknowledge the Friends of the Library organizations at the October LBoT meeting. Suggestions included cards from the Trustees, profiling an individual Friend and sending that information to their Supervisor. Library staff will ask branch managers to send 2-3 examples of how their FOL organization has helped the branch this year.
New business involved a quick review of a draft Communications Timeline that was distributed.

Further discussion focused on how to set Trustees up for success when advocating for FCPL to Supervisors. The Committee requested context about what to request and why it’s needed.

Chair Millhouser distributed one-page info sheets from the Foundation about supporting non-profits and elevator talks as well as the Fall BOT Talking Points.

The next meeting was scheduled for 10:30 - noon on December 6, 2018, location TBD.