Joint meeting of the Library Board of Trustees’ Finance Committee and
The Fairfax Library Foundation Development, Marketing and Advocacy Committee
September 10, 2018

In Attendance
Brian Engler  Darren Ewing  Sandra Hagan  Susan Harman
Jessica Hudson  Sheila Janega  Christine Jones  Cheryl Ann Lee
Fran Millhouser  Jane Miscavage  Mary Jo Patterson  Stella Pekarsky
Gary Russell  Jayne Young

Minutes

Library Board Finance Committee Chair Ewing opened the meeting at 11:02 a.m. with welcomes and introductions.

Mr. Ewing went over the Library Board’s budget process. The Library Board reviews and recommends a budget which then goes to the County Department of Management and Budget. The Board of Supervisors holds hearings for public input.

The Foundation’s Development, Marketing and Advocacy Committee (DMAC) has a dual purpose. They are there to raise funds and recruit friends. The Foundation has an annual jubilee as their biggest fundraiser. The next Jubilee will be April 6, 2019, at the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, kicking off National Library Week. The 2017 Jubilee raised $150,000. The DMAC also works on other fundraising initiatives, to help further support a robust financials to offer back to the Library towards specific programs and services.

An overview of the past 10 budget year was distributed showing the change over time. Another handout, modified from FY15 Public Library Survey data, shows the Fairfax County Public Library compared to other regional libraries. A key takeaway from this document was that while FCPL has less items compared to other systems, it circulates at double the rate.

Handouts about the budget process were also distributed. Background about the library and the funding process was discussed with a reiteration that the Library is a part of the general county fund. In September of each year agencies start to prepare their budget proposal. It is then submitted in October to the Department of Management and Budget. Public hearings take place during April, with budget adoption by the Board of Supervisors in May taking effect July 1. The anticipated FY 2020 budget is projected to be flat with no reductions.

Only approximately 5% is available for funding priorities; 80% of the budget is allocated to personnel costs, and another 15% is typically assigned to contracts, fixed costs, collection development, etc. This being the case alternate funding sources are needed. In the last budget submission, the Library Board asked for two items. Those were consistent hours and fully funding the collection development budget.
Alternate funding venues need to be explored. The Foundation talked about their Board Directors becoming ambassadors to their local branches, to get to know what programs and services are offered. Fundraising is often about developing relationships and sharing personal stories. A suggestion was made to collect community voices and stories showing how valuable the library is to them. Further discussion landed on having someone speak monthly at the Board of Supervisors meeting to share stories and thank them for their support of the library. Programmers should be invited to committee meeting to share success stories and stories for further advocacy.

The Library has a number of newsletters that highlight what is happening at local branches. The Library Board’s Outreach Committee supplies quarterly talking points about the library, which are shared with the Foundation as well.

The Fairfax Library Foundation raises funds through multiple venues. Some upcoming events include friend and fundraisers at California Pizza Kitchen and Alex & Ani’s. While it does not generate a lot of money, it gets the Library and Foundation name out in public places. The Foundation also has an annual Jubilee. They work with Friends groups for sponsorship. They reach out to civic groups, indidual and grant makers. Corporations tend to have CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) department; the Foundation works with them to support various library programs. When corporations want to volunteer, the Foundation works with the Library’s volunteer coordinator to facilitate participation.

A “Fundraiser in a Box” is a new initiative the Foundation is working on; it allows individuals or groups to create their own fundraisers to support the Library. There are also passive venues including social media such as Facebook and Amazon Smile. Facebook has a built in fund raising option.

How can the two Boards help donors bring in more money and further their mission? Board members need to tell their Supervisors what is going on in the library. Both Boards are asked to sign up to share what is going on within in the library during budget hearings with their local Board of Supervisor member. If may be worthwhile for the Foundation and Library Boards to team up and speak together, not just during the budget cycle.

It is also time to look further at the role of the Library in the County’s One Fairfax work related to social and racial equity. The library serves the whole community and needs to be funded in a way that reflects that strong community value. The question to pose to the Board of Supervisors is “How can the library grow to accelerate the mission of equity?”.

The next step for the two committees is to meet after the DMAC meets to discuss the Jubilee.

Library Board Finance Committee Chair Ewing adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m.