

## **AARP Blacksburg Chapter**

### **Minutes**

April 4, 2022

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

#### **Attendees:**

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Terry Wildman, Linda Correll, John Burton, Judy Jones, Susan Terwilliger, Elizabeth Grabau, Joy Herbert, Nola Elliott, Fred Piercy

President Leslie Pendleton called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

The minutes from the March meeting were considered and approved.

**Treasurers Report.** Jerry Niles reported on behalf of Pat Ballard that the Chapter's finances are in good shape. Jerry reported that the Chapter had made the previously approved donation to Warm Hearth's "*Cheeseburger in Parrot-dise*" fund raising event.

Don Creamer suggested that the Chapter consider the possibility of supporting the local "Habitat for Humanity" program. No decision was made at this point. Leslie mentioned that she had emailed the new director, Jim Drader, before the Board meeting to ask how to become a partner organization. She will provide a report at our May meeting.

**Board and Chapter Program Meetings.** Leslie Pendleton led a brief discussion on the decision to revisit "in-person" meetings. Based in part on AARP National lifting restrictions on in person meetings in situations where COVID cases are low, it was decided that in addition to Board meetings our monthly member meetings for April, May and June will be held in-person at the Blacksburg Community Center. Joy Herbert clarified that the Community Center is available for April and May, but the June meeting could not be scheduled because of conflicts with summer programs. The Board briefly discussed holding the June meeting at Warm Hearth, and Ben Crawford added that the Lutheran church might also work. Leslie will follow up on these possibilities.

The Board then briefly discussed a request from Casey Jenkins, Director of the Montgomery County Museum, to announce changes to the Museum's location and programs at the April member meeting. The museum will be moving from its present location to the Wells Fargo building in Christiansburg and will resume operations in June. The Board approved scheduling this brief presentation at the April meeting just prior to the regular meeting starting at noon.

**Use of Name Badges at Member Meetings.** Jerry Niles reported that he and Don Creamer have been working on a plan to deal with badges following Jim Wightman's long history of operating his own particular badge system. Following Jim's long service as the curator of badges and as official "greeter" at member meetings, Jerry noted that our first order of business should be to

formally recognize Jim's exceptional service over many years. Jerry read a brief resolution to this effect and the Board approved this recognition for Jim. Leslie suggested that the formal resolution be printed in the first fall newsletter.

In the meantime, Jerry is working on a revised and less complicated process for handling name badges at our member meetings. The immediate process will be to have members write their names on a card which can be fitted into lanyards that are already available. Ultimately the name cards with AARP logo can be printed for members and can be picked up when they enter the meeting room.

**Picnic.** Terry Wildman briefly mentioned that arrangements for the June 17th (5:00 p.m.) picnic will be made in the next few weeks. We will have a tent with tables and chairs as usual, but selection of a caterer has yet to be made pending examination of possible food choices. Typically, the main item has been barbecue with the "fixings" but no decision has been made yet. Final choice and prices will be discussed with the Board. Leslie asked the Board to consider whether members could be encouraged to bring a friend or potential member to the picnic.

**AARP VA Virtual Newsroom.** Beth Grabau briefly described a conversation with Brian Jacks in which Brian noted that desired stories for the Newsroom should be those that promoted AARP Virginia and its purposes and programs. Stories written just for information purposes would not be prioritized. Given that Virtual Newsroom meetings conflict with our Board meetings, Beth and Susan have declined participation.

**Newsletter.** Beth and Susan noted that the current newsletter has been distributed, and that the next one (August/September/October) is scheduled for mailing at the end of August. Board members noted that the current newsletter is very informative and attractive.

**Community Service.** Judy Jones suggested that the Chapter's Community Service activities generally fit within three categories. First are food drives (human and pet) conducted one or more times each year. Second are the activities that involve "reaching out" to the community in particular ways, such as the car parades conducted during the COVID years. Third are ways that we aid other non-profits. For example, Judy noted that Tina King, Director of the NRV Agency on Aging, had reinforced the request from many non-profits, particularly those involved with food distribution, that what they really need is cash. For example, instead of typical food drives where people donate canned and dry processed foods, an equal value in cash can be used much more efficiently and effectively to acquire what food pantries and soup kitchens need and can use. Judy briefly mentioned a day of service to likely be scheduled sometime in the fall. Specific ideas will be discussed at a future Board meeting.

Following this discussion, a motion was made and passed to make available a "cash basket" at member meetings for those who want to contribute. Along the lines of cash, it was noted that with in-person meetings resuming we will continue the "50-50" process that has long been our practice. Nola Elliott will manage this process.

Finally, Don Creamer suggested that we look into ways of donating or reaching out to refugee families through the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership.

**Chapter Brochure.** Draft copies of the Chapter brochure were distributed for review and comments. The brochure will be finalized in the coming weeks with the primary goal of using it to aide in recruiting new members. In this regard Leslie asked Board members to consider if any of us would like to serve on the membership committee, which could use another member or two. Fred Piercy and Ben Crawford agreed to serve as co-chairs.

**Challenge Grant Proposals.** Two proposals, previously discussed in Board meetings, were submitted. First, Wendy and Joy submitted a 10K proposal to purchase large round tables to better facilitate face-to-face conversation at Community Center meetings, and to acquire Zoom equipment capable of facilitating hybrid meetings when needed. Second, Leslie and Linda submitted a proposal in the amount of \$7,430 for a mural design to be placed on the right-side brick wall at 153 College Avenue (occupied by Gillie's Restaurant), a prime location in downtown Blacksburg.

**Health and Wellness Fair.** Leslie shared the exhibit form designed to invite potential exhibitors to apply for participation in the September 21, 2022 Health and Wellness Fair. She noted that that a vetting process will be in place to ensure that all exhibitors will be appropriate for this health and wellness themed event. The committee is meeting on the second Thursday of each month to plan the event.

**Essential Components of Successful AARP Chapters.** Don Creamer shared a working paper he has written to make the point that AARP chapters, where they are active and successful, are good for seniors and their communities. The critical thing, however, is to determine what separates successful chapters from those less so. Don argues that there are at least six characteristics of successful chapters, which can be replicated across locations. Don has shared his paper with Joyce Williams, President of AARP Virginia, Brian Jacks, Associate Director, and others. Don's goal is to advance this conversation statewide. We will revisit this topic at our May Board meeting.

Ben Crawford announced the Memorial Day celebration at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin and encouraged participation. Terry has been invited to participate in the event. Leslie encouraged Board members who are veterans to provide information about their military service and experiences for our Veteran Connection newsletter column. She will follow-up with Ben, Terry, John, and Fred. Don provided information for an earlier column. Judy asked that we investigate whether any of our female members served in the military.

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Submitted by Terry Wildman, Chapter Secretary