

AARP Blacksburg Chapter
Minutes
June 4, 2019
Blacksburg Recreation Center

Attendees: Jerry Niles, Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Sally Anna Stapleton, Doug Feuerbach, Leslie Pendleton, Tamara Hodsdon, Pat Ballard, Wendy Baldwin, Pat Hyer, Ben Crawford, Lisa Moose, Hugh VanLandingham

Minutes for May 7, 2019 board meeting were approved.

Announcements:

Nola Elliott in hospital with pneumonia. Leslie Pendleton will send a card.

Treasurer's Report:

Pat Ballard report that there is about \$12,000 in our account; \$5500 is LLI money. Revenue from the joint AARP/LLI Bluegrass and BBQ event was short about \$350. We paid more for food and German Club rental this year. Jerry asked that the Treasurer split the excess cost between the two organizations (LLI and AARP).

Pat Hyer will review LLI revenue and expenses with incoming LLI Board President, Tamara Hodsdon, using records from the treasurer. LLI-related expenditures are usually approved by at least two people (Niles/Hyer, now Hodsdon/Hyer/Niles as needed).

Steppin' Out:

Wendy Baldwin reported that the chapter received a \$925 grant from AARP Virginia for support of expenses related to Steppin' Out booth. We plan to use the grant to pay the entry fee (\$250) and other expenses. The chapter booth will use the theme "Step into Local AARP," to help people understand that there is an active local, not just national, AARP chapter and what we do. Grids provided by the town will allow us to display pictures, local volunteer opportunities, tax aide program, etc.

Sally Anna Stapleton is coordinating the order of AARP-related items for give aways. We will be a cooling station for Steppin' Out and will make water and cold packs available if someone needs them. Jerry and others will assist with logistics. Board members signed up for slots during Steppin' Out.

Wendy proposed that we offer membership for 1.5 years to anyone who signs up at Steppin' Out. Ben Crawford reminded the Board that historically we have done this. To confirm this as policy, a motion was made that any payment of chapter membership fee after August 1 would carry forward to following calendar year. The motion carried.

Chapter Awards:

Tamara Hodsdon distributed a succinct schedule for nominations for local awards (Chapter Service and Community Spirit). Nominations should include information on accomplishments so some there is substance to the nomination. Several possibilities were discussed. Nominations are needed by Oct. 15.

Picnic:

Terry and Sue are busy preparing their home for our annual picnic. DJ has been requested by Pat Ballard. The Board expressed great gratitude to Terry and Sue for hosting the annual picnic at their home.

Outreach to Warm Hearth:

The memory class presentation at the May chapter meeting was well received. Lisa Moose suggested that we consider repeating the program at Warm Hearth (WH) this fall, as one way to address the connection between our local AARP chapter and WH residents. Jerry will follow up with WH Marketing person. This seems like a reasonable outreach effort to WH residents.

Ben made a motion that we host an event at Warm Hearth to introduce WH residents to the local AARP chapter. Motion approved. Jerry will initiate contact to follow up.

Lapsed Membership Issues:

Coreen Metz prepared a list of people who have not paid their dues for two years or more and asked how we want to handle. Jerry will send a letter August 1 inviting them to pay their dues, or be dropped from newsletter list. But first, he and others will triage the list to make sure we handling the issue appropriately with longer-term members.

Program and Publicity re Chapter Activities:

Doug Feuerbach wondered if it would be helpful to advertise our special speakers using flyers at various business. Jerry responded that in his experience, this has gotten more difficult to do since more businesses are reluctant to post flyers and it is a lot of work for minimal return. Other suggestions included announcements in the RSVP newsletter and in the online service "Next 3 Days." These might be helpful and require less effort. Lisa is already posting announcements in the Roanoke Times calendar for our monthly chapter meetings.

Lisa mentioned that they are pursuing a possible speaker suggested by AARP Virginia on the 2020 census for the September program.

Continuation of April Meeting Debrief:

Part I comments: Are there things that we can do to encourage members from more diverse backgrounds? Race is one aspect of diversity, but also diversity of backgrounds other than VT or socioeconomic status. Don Creamer suggested that the best way to pursue more diverse membership is to set up cooperative/joint ventures with relevant organizations. Jerry noted that regional and statewide AARP meetings have large proportions of people of color.

Pat Hyer talked about commitment of LLI to do programming around issues of race even with a vastly white membership base. Examples include the Dialogue on Race panel, classes on recognizing and addressing racism, black achievements, soul music, the effects of voter suppression efforts, and others. Jerry suggested that we can also look to use our financial support for organizations that serve minority populations.

In summary, there are several ways we can pay attention to diversity through programming, investments in and partnerships with other organizations, and member recruitment. We might promote the talk on the 2020 Census as a way to make strategic outreach to special communities. If successful, may need to plan for a larger meeting space.

Newsletter:

Question is whether the newsletter responsibility as currently structured is sustainable for the editor. The group discussed the possibility of further newsletter consolidations and came to a consensus that 5 per year (2 fall, 3 spring; down from 9) was acceptable. The implications are most important for the program committee, which will have to make adjustments in preparing future program briefs. Jerry was asked to talk to Carolyn Rude about reducing the total number of newsletters and see whether that might make her workload more manageable.

The group also discussed the need to help generate content, particularly individual stories, possible travel adventures, or stories illustrating social connection. Put "newsletter content" on agenda as a regular item so that we generate content ideas and assignments.

AARP Virginia Liaison:

Ben Crawford reported that the AARP Virginia President (Carol Downs) will be coming for Steppin' Out. She will also come for installation of officers in December.

Ben was part of AARP team that met with Congressman Morgan Griffith. They discussed with him the high cost of drugs, deductions for medical expenses, and age discrimination. 31 Virginia teams visited with various members of Congress.

Community Service:

Sally Anna reported that over 300 pounds of baby supplies/food/diapers were collected at the last meeting. Interfaith Food Pantry was happy to get these supplies.

June 10: AARP Movies for Grownups at Regal Theater, Rocketman; need to sign up for free pass

June 15: Train Museum, Roanoke, free entry for AARP members and grandchildren

Community Foundation/Aging in Place Taskforce:

On June 11, five AARP members will participate in a materials evaluation session and be trained as facilitators for Aging in Place workshop.

Legislative:

Val Coluni would like to transition out of his legislative liaison role. Would be helpful to recruit someone already engaged in legislative affairs, but no one came immediately to mind.

Website:

Don and Lisa are planning to revise the look of website.

Minutes prepared by Pat Hyer and submitted June 6, 2019