

## Minutes/Notes

June 6, 2023

Blacksburg Recreation Center

**Attendees:** Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Leslie Pendleton, Jerry Niles, Pam Knox, Fred Piercy, John Burton, Beth Grabau, Pat Ballard, Ben Crawford, Wendy Baldwin, and Judith Jones.

**President Leslie Pendleton** called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

**The minutes:** The May 2023 board meeting minutes were considered and approved.

### Old Business:

*Finances.* Pat Ballard reported that our finances are good. Don Creamer will investigate a potential glitch with our payment page for dues, events, etc.

*Chapter Picnic.* The Picnic will be on June 22 at Terry Wildman and Sue Magliaro's house from 5:00-7:00. Leslie will pick up the food at Bottom of the Stairs. Jerry Niles stated that we need a head count early next week. Pat reports the current number as 30. Terry reported that he has reserved a 20'x 40' pole tent, seven tables, and 40 chairs for \$460.00.

*Fourth of July Parade.* Leslie has registered our chapter. We will use Leslie's husband's pickup truck. Some will walk and some will ride. Don reminded the group of the "accordion effect" (small changes at the front of a line of marchers or traffic, etc. cause larger fluctuations further back in the line) which causes those in the back to have to run to keep up. Leslie will get the word out to the membership to solicit marchers (and riders). AARP participants should wear red.

*Oktoberfest.* Terry reported that the Eastern Divide will not work as a venue for our Fall Social. He and Don will explore the Rising Silo. The current date of September 27 may have to be moved. The action was tabled until the September Board Meeting.

*Adopt a Highway.* Pat Hipkins was not present to provide an update. Leslie led a discussion about whether to go forward with the Adopt-a-Highway initiative or not. The group felt that this connection would involve too large a commitment (based on current levels of participation in community service activities) and too large a level of risk. The decision was made to not go further with Adopt a Highway but to explore volunteering with the book section or senior section in the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Pat Ballard will mention our interest at the Christmas Store's next Board meeting.

*Pathways to Success Aging.* Don, Committee Chair, reported on the Phase 1 actions of the committee with the representatives of the 16 non-profit organizations involved in this initiative. The committee, comprised of Don, Wilma, Pam, and Leslie, is using the Yale Wellness Model with 8 dimensions to organize their input and efforts. During Phase 1, representatives of the organizations were still getting to know each other. Jerry sat in on the meetings and observed that there was a lot going on for seniors but little integration across the non-profit organizations. Big results so far include networking among organizations providing services for seniors and identification of contacts and contact information for each organization.

Once this phase is completed, the work will move to Phase 2 to include ways in which the organizations can cover needs and gaps. The question is always one of how to engage

seniors in issues like caregiving. Most seniors will either be a caregiver or need a caregiver, but many are in denial about their future. Jerry pointed out that the Agency on Aging should be the first go-to call for seniors, but many are unaware of its existence. The SeniorNavigator could fill a lot of gaps, but most are unaware of it also.

*Chapter Leadership.* It was decided to table Don and Jerry's letter to solicit new leaders. With input from the Board, Jerry and Don will go back to the drawing board to get a mix of general involvement (and general solicitation) vs recruitment for specific tasks (using specific targeting).

*Departing AARP Board Member.* Leslie announced that Beth Grabau will be relocating to the Pittsburgh area, and that June was her last Board meeting. Her contributions to the Board, including serving as Newsletter Editor in 2022, are much appreciated, and she will be missed.

*Engagement.* Fred announced that he and Pam are engaged.

### **New Business.**

*Upcoming Google Changes for VT Retirees.* John Burton presented information about the elimination of Google services for such things as email, calendar services, and online storage. Google will be replaced by Microsoft 365 online services. Most of this should be transparent but the information stored on Google Drive will have to be moved to MS One Drive, offline storage, or lost. Don will investigate our current contract with Google since virtually all of our storage is on Google Drive.

*AARP Virginia June Advocacy.* AARP Virginia's June Advocacy Update (see attached). Don and Leslie also noted that AARP VA is actively seeking volunteers for their Speakers Bureau.

### **Committee Reports:**

*Programs.* Wendy provided an update on Fall programs and other potential programs, including memory, inhibitory control, environmental issues (pre-cycling, recycling, and politics), and safety concerns of, and for, seniors, osteopathic medicine (VCOM) vs "traditional" medicine, and long-term care.

*Newsletter.* Fred and Pam will send out a request to the membership for family recipes. They have solicited several articles from the membership. The deadline for information to be included in the August newsletter is July 25.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 AM.**

**AARP Virginia's June Advocacy Volunteer Update**  
(Provided by JessiKa Eglin, Associate State Director for Advocacy)

**In AARP Virginia's June Advocacy Volunteer Update**

1. State Advocacy Update
2. Federal Advocacy Update
3. What is the Debt Ceiling
4. New AARP Caregivers Poll
5. Advocacy Volunteer Opportunities and Events

**State Advocacy Update**

- **State Budget:** Budget negotiators from the House and Senate continue to hold off on reaching a budget compromise, with the reasoning so far ranging from a failure to agree over Governor Youngkin's proposed tax cuts to uncertainty about the future state of the economy to consternation around Washington's debt ceiling stand-off. Presumably, with a federal debt-ceiling deal agreed upon, they will return to the table in the near future. The beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup> looms.
- **First Nomination Contests:** A number of nomination contests have taken place already on the Republican side, with John McGuire (SD10), Bryce Reeves (SD28), Delores Riley Oates (HD31), Chris Obenshain (HD41), Tim Griffin (HB53), Tom Garrett (HD56) and Baxter Ennis (HD89) seizing their party's nomination for the November general election. There will be a firehouse primary for the Republican nominee in SD18 on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The remaining nominees on both sides will be selected in the regular primary election on June 20<sup>th</sup>. For a deeper dive, check out this [primer](#) from VPAP.
- **RetirePath Virginia Rollout:** In 2021, one of AARP Virginia's most significant legislative wins was the creation of a new work and save program. That program, now called RetirePath Virginia, is being administered by Virginia529 and is expected to launch on July 1. Eligible employers have started receiving sign-up notices, and employee contributions should begin later this year. Currently, about 1.2 million working Virginians, or 45% of all private-sector employees, do not have a retirement savings option through their employer. This program is expected to cut that number in half. Learn more [here](#).

**Federal Advocacy Update**

- **High-Speed Internet:** AARP scored a big win in April when the Federal Communications Commission agreed to release Affordable Connectivity Enrollment data by state and age, which gives us an idea of how many of the 50-plus are signing up for the program. This win is a direct result of AARP's work with FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel. The data will be crucial in educating Senators on the importance of the program for older adults in their states. Based on national data from April, out of more than 17 million enrolled

households, 44.5% or 7.6 million of those are 50-plus. In Virginia, 40.7% of enrolled households are age 50-plus. Learn more [here](#).

- **Rx Prices:** On May 1, AARP, along with 40 organizations, sent a [group letter](#) to all U.S. Senators urging them to immediately act on legislation to lower drug prices through increased competition, transparency and accountability. The letter specifically notes bipartisan bills in the Senate that strengthen the patent system by banning anti-competitive tactics from big drug companies, require drug companies to disclose and justify high prices, and require more transparency and accountability to better ensure pharmacy benefit managers act in the best interests of patients and consumers.
- **Medicare:** On May 10, AARP sent a [letter](#) to endorse the Chronic Care Management Improvement Act of 2023 ([H.R. 2829](#)). This bipartisan legislation would help ensure that Medicare beneficiaries with chronic conditions have greater access to coordinated care. By removing cost-sharing associated with the chronic care management (CCM) code, the bill reduces financial burdens and unexpected bills.
- **Appropriations:** On May 17, AARP sent letters to top appropriators in Congress urging continued investments in programs that help ensure older Americans can live independently and with dignity as they age. Specifically, AARP called for increased funding for the Social Security Administration to address customer service challenges; funding for Older Americans Act programs; and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly and the Community Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Find the full text of the letters [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

### What is the Debt Ceiling

Lawmakers have worked this week to extend the debt ceiling and keep the U.S. from experiencing its first default on its debt in the nation's history. Here is an [explanation](#) from AARP on what the debt ceiling is and why it is important.

### New AARP Caregivers Poll

A new AARP [poll](#) released in May shows that the majority of voters want more support for family caregivers and 68% say it is important for Congress to take action to help seniors live independently in their own homes. Caregiving takes a big chunk out of many caregivers' yearly finances and several hours from their week. More than seven in ten voters age 18 and older say they would be more likely to support a candidate who backed proposals to support family caregivers, such as paid family leave, a tax credit of up to \$5,000 and expanded access to support and respite services. Learn more [here](#).

### Advocacy Volunteer Opportunities and Events

Below is a list of upcoming AARP advocacy-related events for the month of June for volunteers to join or get involved in.

**Tuesday, June 6**, at 4:00 p.m.

**AARP Volunteer Teletown Hall**

Join the call to hear about AARP's plan to protect Social Security for future generations.

**Call-in Number: 877-209-3531** (toll-free and no PIN required)

If you have a question feel free to submit it in advance by emailing [volunteer@aarp.org](mailto:volunteer@aarp.org).

**Friday, June 16**, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

**Monthly State Advocacy Meeting**

Join ASD Jared Calfee virtually every third Friday of the month for updates on AARP Virginia's state advocacy work. The information provided is critical for State Advocacy Volunteers. To receive the calendar invite and Zoom link email Jared at [JKCalfee@aarp.org](mailto:JKCalfee@aarp.org).

**Friday, June 16**, at 11:00 a.m.

**NEW Monthly Federal Advocacy Meeting**

Join ASD JessiKa Eglin virtually for the first Monthly Federal Advocacy Meeting to receive updates on AARP's federal advocacy work. The information provided is critical for Congressional District Volunteers. A reoccurring calendar invite is forthcoming and there is no need to register. [Click here to join.](#)

**Wednesday, June 21**, from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Improving Services Through Connection**

AARP Foundation is proud to host its 2023 Experience Corps National Meeting, *Improving Service Through Connection*. Our nationwide community of staff, volunteers, nonprofits and partners will gather in person and virtually for conversations around community and equity, education and literacy, and volunteerism and social connection. The event will cover principal areas of focus, including older adult volunteerism, social connections, literacy education and community building. [Register here.](#)

**Thursday, June 22**

**AARP Telephone Townhall on High-Speed Internet**

Join AARP's National team for a telephone town hall on high-speed internet with White House speakers Stephen Benjamin (former Mayor of Columbia, SC) and Mitch Landrieu (former Mayor of New Orleans, LA). More details forthcoming.

**Tuesday, June 27**, from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

**Social Security: Here Today and Here Tomorrow**

Join AARP and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare for a night of games, drinks and information at the Black History Museum and Cultural Center in Richmond. This free event is a unique opportunity to learn more about how Social Security provides you and your loved ones with basic financial security. It is also a great opportunity to get your Social Security questions answered by leading national and local experts, including a former Social Security Commissioner. Please note that this event is in-person only. Location: 122 West Leigh St. Richmond, VA, 23220. [Register for your free ticket\(s\) here.](#)