

AARP Blacksburg Chapter

Minutes

February 1, 2022

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

Attendees:

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Todd Solberg, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Terry Wildman, Wendy Baldwin, Pat Ballard, Linda Correll, John Burton, Judy Jones, Sue Hossack, Susan Terwilliger, Elizabeth Grabau, Joy Herbert, Nola Elliott, Fred Piercy, Kai Duncan

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

The minutes from the January meeting were considered and approved.

Treasurer's Report. Pat Ballard reported that a few membership payments were coming in, that she was still waiting for the holiday luncheon invoice, and that the renewal for "Quicken" was due. Pat asked if Board approval was needed for the *quicken* payment; it was not. Pat then referred to Jerry Niles for his report on the Chapter's annual Financial Review.

Finance Review. Jerry began his report by complimenting Pat Ballard for her excellent organization and detail in managing the Chapter's budget. Leslie Pendleton reiterated the same.

Jerry reminded the Board that our annual budget report needs to be submitted to AARP National each year. Jerry went on to note that our actual expenditures for 2021 were approximately \$2800 below what was budgeted due mainly to the annual picnic not being held, and a reduced number attending our annual holiday luncheon. As expected, the pandemic severely impacted social gatherings for the Chapter.

Other budget items of interest were as follows: First, the total cost for producing and distributing Chapter newsletters was approximately \$1400. Second, the Chapter donated \$2900 to local charities, with \$2400 of that amount coming from the Chapter savings account due to the cancellation of our 2020 Health and Wellness Fair, and the loss of those funds. Third, Jerry noted that we received \$1800 in membership dues, and \$2,010 in member donations.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Budget Review Report and the proposed budget of \$8,701 for 2022. The motion passed.

Ben Crawford asked Pat Ballard how the Tax Aide program would be run this year given the continuing pandemic situation. Pat reported that people asking for help would drop off their material and then come by later to collect their completed forms. Pat noted that one particular

issue causing confusion was the government stimulus checks. Pat also reminded the Board that the AARP Tax Aide program was a national initiative.

Memberships and Member Dues Collection. Leslie Pendleton opened this discussion by showing a chart depicting dues last paid in 2019, 2020, and 2021, and also including complimentary, honorary, life and lifetime memberships. Observations included with this chart were that some may be receiving Chapter benefits (e.g., newsletter, meetings) having not paid dues for one or even two years, that some current board members have not yet paid 2022 dues, that some Board member spouses are shown as non-current/paid members, and a few other details/questions that at the very least present a confusing membership picture for the Chapter.

A rather long and wide-ranging discussion ensued, largely centered around a well-recognized fact that the way our Chapter handles membership in general, and member dues payments—particularly the timing of those payments—is more than just a bit confusing. One solid fact reported by Beth Grabau is that 275 newsletters were sent out in our most recent mailing. This bit of solid ground is off-set by the uncertain payment status of some who are receiving these newsletters.

Among the board members weighing in explicitly on this discussion were Leslie, Don, Jerry, Judy and Linda. Pertinent observations from this conversation include the following: 1. Our process for handling memberships is a bit too loose. 2. Someone needs to work out a better membership system for the Chapter to consider implementing. 3. Logical “start dates” for the Chapter to consider in launching into a new year of membership are September—when the Chapter returns to activity following a summer recess—and January when the actual new year begins. 4. A membership letter sent to both new members and current members paying dues for another year might help all members understand their membership status and the benefits from membership (Leslie Pendleton shared such a letter that she has produced). 5. A small sub-committee might be established to propose a clear solution to the whole range of membership questions and issues. More to come on this.

Community Service. Judy Jones began the community service discussion with some developments regarding the 2,000 or so books collected during the “Books for Vets” project led by Tom Hohenshil. Since the local Veteran’s Hospitals have closed their libraries during the Covid pandemic the books have been left stranded in Tom’s garage. However, with Pat Ballard’s help a home for the books has been found at the local “Christmas Store,” and with help from Tom, Jerry, and Roy Jones, Leslie will move the books from Tom’s house during the current week. In this context, Leslie reported that there are about 14 veteran organizations in the NRV, but all of her attempts to coordinate with some of them regarding the books have met with no success. Thankfully, the Christmas Store provides a happy ending to this story.

Judy reported that Sunday, September 11 is the National Day of Service. She posed the question of whether it would be possible to have Chapter members form a group to help the

Christmas Store organize their “senior room and/or book room” on this date. This will be pursued further as the date gets closer.

Annual Activity Report. Leslie reminded the Board that time has come to complete and submit the Chapter annual report of volunteer hours. This report goes to AARP National and covers a number of volunteer categories such as legislative, education, community service, health and wellness, hunger, and long-term care. Each year Chapter presidents struggle with how to quantify hours that chapter members have served across these categories. Judy Jones suggested that the Chapter try to narrow down the specific categories of volunteerism that we really want to focus on. Some examples may include food and clothing drives, support in the Veterans category, long term care, and health. Linda Correll suggested that we could elaborate on this in a newsletter article to let members know what our focus is and how folks can contribute. Leslie concluded the discussion with the observation that we need some feedback on what we, as a Chapter, can commit to.

Newsletter. Beth Grabu reported that work on our next (April, May, June) newsletter is well underway. She expects that it will be an 8-page newsletter, and that she will need any further material for that edition by early March.

Program Committee. Linda Correll reported briefly on Chapter programs through the remaining months until our summer break. They are as follows:

- February – *Family Relationship Issues of Older Adults*, with Fred Piercy and Katherine Allen
- March – *Mushrooms*, with Stephen Kaplan
- April – *Geology of the NRV*, with Will Orndorff
- **May** – *Critical Race Theory*, with Wornie Reed

Standing Rules, Committee Descriptions, and Chapter Bylaws. Linda Correll reported again on work that has been ongoing to update our Chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules—basically all the formal information needed to understand how the Chapter is organized and how it works. This work is now nearing completion and Linda requests that Board members and committee chairs examine and update the descriptions of how each committee is organized and how it works in terms of responsibilities and procedures. These documents are located on Google Drive folders. Sue Hossack provided a brief demonstration showing how to access these documents and how they may be modified. Linda did not provide a hard and fast deadline for completing this work but implied that it should be done very soon, such as before the next Board meeting.

ARPA Proposals, Blacksburg Response, and AARP Challenge Grants. Wendy Baldwin provided an update on proposals and ideas recently provided by Chapter members to the Town of Blacksburg following a call for proposals and ideas on how to allocate funds received under the American Recovery Program Act. At the time of this Board meeting the Town Council had not provided feedback on proposals, basically leaving things in a “wait and see” mode according to Wendy. (However, as these minutes were being written responses have been made available

and we will have much more to discuss at our next Board meeting, and in fact between now and then.)

Wendy also noted the proposals for AARP Challenge Grants are due on March 22. Notification of awards will be sometime in Mid-May, and funds will need to be expended by November 30. Wendy requested that anyone willing to work on one or more proposals under this program should contact her. Wendy noted that previous funded proposals can be easily found on the AARP Virginia website. Finally, Wendy reported that she, Don, John, Jerry and Leslie were scheduled to meet at 1:00 p.m. that day with Joy Herbert and Jack Leahy at the Blacksburg Community Center (BCC) to identify a possible collaboration to support senior services offered through the BCC.

Health and Wellness Fair. Leslie reported that she had met with Tammy Caldwell at the Christiansburg Recreation Center and they had established a date for our now long delayed Health and Wellness Fair. That date is Wednesday, September 21, 2022. However, Leslie quickly expressed concern that given the current and likely uncertainties presented by the ongoing Covid situation launching into a complicated and time-consuming planning process may not be a good idea. She also noted that given the planning process is a lengthy one, a decision needs to be made now as whether to proceed. While some Board members (Linda, Don) also expressed concern, some (Ben, Wendy) were more hopeful. Ben noted that Jim Dau, AARP Virginia State Director, recently stated that restrictions on gatherings will likely be lifted beginning in April. As a former Chair of the Health Fair Planning committee, Wendy suggested that contact be made with pharmacies to gauge their interest in the fair. Her reasoning is that the pharmacies and their services, e.g., vaccines, health readings, etc., are a key feature of the health fair. Further discussion about the health fair will continue in the coming month and at the next Board meeting on March 1.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58am.

Submitted by Terry Wildman, Chapter Secretary