

AARP Blacksburg Chapter

Minutes

March 1, 2022

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

Attendees:

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Terry Wildman, Wendy Baldwin, Pat Ballard, John Burton, Judy Jones, Sue Hossack, Susan Terwilliger, Elizabeth Grabau, Fred Piercy, Chuck Burress

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

The minutes from the February meeting were considered and approved.

Future meeting formats. Leslie Pendleton asked the group to consider whether the Board meetings and regular member meetings should return to in-person, and when that might safely happen. Most Board members expressed comfort with in-person meetings, especially if masks were worn. Others wondered if a hybrid format would be more appropriate given that some may still have concerns about the lingering presence of Covid infections. One issue previously experienced with hybrid meetings is the effectiveness of the equipment employed, but with the idea that issue could be fixed the Board agreed to conducting future Board meetings in a hybrid format. The Board also decided to continue member meetings in the remote Zoom format through June.

Newsletter. Beth Grabau reminded the Board that any remaining material for the Spring newsletter would be needed immediately. Specifically, she requested details about the Chapter Picnic to be held at the home of Terry Wildman and Sue Magliaro. Terry agreed to send driving directions following the meeting.

Picnic. Following a brief discussion, the picnic was scheduled for Friday, June 17, at 5:00pm. Given the need for reasonable food safety protocols it was decided that all food would be arranged through a caterer to be determined. Judy Jones recommended that we give consideration to *Hazel Bea*, a local caterer. Regarding alcohol, folks attending would be invited to bring their own beverage of choice. Advertisement for the picnic will be handled through the Spring newsletter, announcements at upcoming member meetings, and by MailChimp.

Programs. The status of programs for upcoming meetings remains unchanged from what was reported in the February meeting minutes.

Membership update. Leslie Pendleton reported that she had sent letters and emails to members who have not updated and paid for their 2022 membership. Pat Ballard reported

receiving 25-30 memberships in recent days, most by mail in comparison to online. This suggested that Leslie's efforts were paying off.

Leslie also reported that following a discussion with Ann Crowley, benefits manager, Virginia Tech Human Resources, an estimated 150 new retirees each year will be provided with the Blacksburg AARP Chapter brochure. It was also reported that our membership database is currently being updated (for example, removing the names of both deceased members and members who haven't paid 2022 dues to the "previous members" sheet in the database. Don Creamer also recommended revising the membership form to allow more information about spouses and partners.

AARP VA Virtual Newsroom. Leslie shared a letter from Joyce Williams, AARP VA State President, requesting assistance from the Blacksburg Chapter in recruiting people who may be willing to participate with the Virtual Newsroom Team in attending and reporting on newsworthy events in the Southwest Virginia Region. This request recognizes that our region is under-represented in terms of such reporting. Don Creamer, one of the recipients of this letter along with Leslie, suggested that he had persons in mind who could do some writing and reporting, and indeed thought that any member of the Board could be helpful in this regard. Beth and Susan agreed to share stories about events published in our newsletter article. This discussion concluded with the request that any of us attending any meeting of general interest to an AARP audience consider writing and submitting a brief report.

Brochure updating. Leslie Pendleton shared a copy of our current brochure and reported that Cyndy Graham is currently doing another edit that will be shared for comments. The plan is to have this finalized in April.

Standing Rules. The standing rules committee asks that each of us review and update if needed information about Committees we may be chairing and Officer positions.

ARPA proposals. For Blacksburg, 50 ARPA related proposals have been submitted, four of which are from Blacksburg AARP. These proposals are open for public comment, with responses needed by March 11. It was noted that the Roanoke Times had brief articles on the Blacksburg proposal process in the February 23 and 28 editions. Board members who had read these articles thought they were quite limited in terms of reporting on the scope of the submitted projects. Wendy Baldwin noted that the Blacksburg process was more open than other municipalities, such as Christiansburg.

AARP Community Challenge Grant proposals. Wendy Baldwin and Leslie Pendleton reported on projects centered on the Blacksburg Community Center, and the BRAA/Public Arts Committee Art Collaboration. The Blacksburg Community Center project will request funds to purchase round tables and upgraded Zoom capability to better support public meetings. This project will be submitted by the Community Center.

Leslie reported that she and Linda, along with Alisa Colpitts (VP, BRAA) met with Susan Mattingly, town Council member. While the Public Arts Committee formed in June 2021 has yet to meet due to COVID, Chair Jason Hardy communicated that the Public Arts Committee isn't ready to discuss possible projects. One possibility mentioned was a mural art project on the side of the Gilley's building at 153 College Avenue, as part of the Draper Road Streetscape. A complexity would be dealing with the "Lester Group" who are owners of the building. Another issue discussed is the short timeline of these projects for spending allocated funds. Don reported previously watching a Web presentation on a large Community Challenge Grant in Philadelphia that could have implications for Draper Road here in Blacksburg.

Don Creamer also reported on a meeting with Blacksburg's Town Manager, Mark Verneil, to gain input on ideas for possible Community Challenge grant proposals. While mark offered to provide feedback, at the time of the board meeting, he had not followed up with Don.

Health and Wellness Fair. Leslie reported that the Health and Wellness Fair has been scheduled at the Christiansburg Community Center for Wednesday, September 21 from noon to 4:00 p.m. Because this project is done in partnership with VCOM, Leslie has been working with VCOM to update our "Memo of Agreement." Don and Wendy raised the issue of our previous 50-50 funds split with VCOM and suggested that given VCOM's reduced commitment to the project the amount allocated to VCOM should be in the 25-30% range. Wendy also reminded the Board that profits from the fair also support community organizations focused on seniors. The Christiansburg Recreation Center is including information on the Health Fair on the back cover of their Spring/Summer brochure.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59am