

AARP Blacksburg Chapter
Minutes
September 3, 2019
Blacksburg Recreation Center

Attendees: Jerry Niles, Don Creamer, Sally Anna Stapleton, Doug Feuerbach, Leslie Pendleton, Tamara Hodsdon, Pat Ballard, Wendy Baldwin, Pat Hyer, Lisa Moose, Chuck Burrell, Linda Correll, Ryan Martin, Jim Montgomery, Ben Crawford, Joy Herbert, Jeananne Bame

Minutes for June 4, 2019 board meeting were approved.

Announcements:

Lisa Moose reported on the September program on the U.S. Census. The census survey may be completed online. Potential scams may be a problem and there are efforts underway to educate seniors. The invited speaker for September canceled, but an alternative speaker has been secured.

The May program on memory from Adult Day Services was well received. Lisa Moose suggested that we schedule that talk at Warm Hearth; it was presented in mid-June. The topic fit well with the Warm Hearth initiative to establish a "Dementia Friendly" community. They created a larger event with lunch and training. 80 people attended the lunch and speaker; 60 stayed for training. Jerry Niles reported that the training on interacting with those with dementia was very informative.

At the June meeting, the AARP board approved a policy that allows any annual membership payment after August 1 to carry forward to the following calendar year (covering up to 17 months). Don Creamer has set up the payment software to accept this.

Jerry Niles reviewed the list of those who have not paid membership in more than two years. He has written a column for the newsletter to encourage them to update their membership. If no response, then he will send a letter.

Treasurer's Report:

Pat Ballard reported that not much has changed. She has made several payments as needed, but not much action right now.

Steppin' Out:

Wendy Baldwin reported on Steppin' Out. The cost for the AARP station in a themed area was \$250. We spent \$470 out of our \$900+ grant from AARP Virginia. We were given a tent and framework so didn't have to pay for these items. Jerry suggested preparing a card (small, two-sided). We may use extra funds to pay ahead for Steppin' Out in 2020, which could be done as early as September. Wendy will propose alternatives to grant source. Several people reported concerns about low traffic at our location behind the farmers' market. Ryan Martin reported that Y did not get much traffic either. Wendy will give feedback to DBI about our experience. Sally Anna thanked Jerry and Ruth Anne for stepping in when she became ill. Many thanks to Sally Anna and Wendy for organizing the effort.

Chapter Awards:

Tamara Hodsden passed out a request for local awards nominations for 2019. Nominations are due to her by October 15. Please include information on accomplishments.

Holiday Luncheon:

The holiday luncheon at Warm Hearth will be December 10. The board meeting will precede the luncheon; it will take place at the Woodlands Studio at Warm Hearth (adjacent to the banquet room).

Whitebarrel Winery Social Event:

Don Creamer reported on the joint social/winetasting event for AARP, LLI, and VTRA scheduled for October 3, 5:30-8:30. The \$25 fee includes appetizers and a tasting or glass of wine. One email note has been sent to AARP members. Don will send other reminders about the social and about membership renewal to AARP members.

Leadership Development:

Don Creamer reported on efforts to recruit new board members and officers. Linda Correll and Chuck Burress have agreed to a board role and attended today to become familiar with AARP chapter workings. Their appointments become official at the holiday luncheon.

Jerry Niles urged board members to make personal contacts to encourage new membership – always the most successful approach.

Legislative Role Transition:

Doug Feuerbach volunteered to take on the legislative liaison role. Val Coluni resigned due to health issues. Doug was involved in and around policy during his career in environmental management and looks forward to learning more about how to advocate for policies in support of seniors.

Doug distributed a copy of AARP material, “AARP in the States.” He might choose to focus on one important policy topic at a time in his newsletter reports.

Food Drives:

Sally Anna Stapleton reported that September has been designated a nationwide hunger awareness month. She would like to proceed with a food collection at our September meeting (weekend backpack food) and again in November (pet food drive).

Aging in Place

Pat Hyer reported on plans to offer an aging in place workshop, possibly 3 sessions, as part of the LLI spring program. The sessions would be facilitated by AARP members who participated in a training. The plan is to offer this in co-sponsorship with AARP Chapter and VTRA. Materials have been prepared by the Aging in Place Leadership Team. Pat has served on this group over the last year.

Website Payment Process

Website has now been optimized for use on smart phones. The header material stays in place and you can scroll through material. The payment page includes an opportunity to make a donation to AARP in \$10 increments. Pat H suggested that we include somewhere the statement that donations are not tax deductible. Jerry suggested that the newsletter have its own tab in the navigation bar.

Town of Blacksburg:

Joy Herbert reported that she is working on lots of day trip tours, some with Parks & Rec, some LLI, some for other groups. Jerry requested use of the Multi-purpose room at the Community Center beginning in January to accommodate some larger public meetings.

AARP Virginia Liaison:

Ben Crawford reported that Val Coluni sends his warm regards to the board. Health issues keep him from continuing in his role.

There is a housing forum September 15, 3:00-5:00, at Blacksburg United Methodist Church.

Several AARP board members (Jerry Niles, Nola Elliott, Doug Feuerbach, Ben Crawford) recently met with Congressman Griffith for about an hour. The congressman is interested in working on controlling drug price increases, an AARP priority. The congressman shared the complexity of the drug price issue. Proposed legislation never got to the floor, in part because of items attached to the bill that then made it less palatable for votes. However, momentum seems to be building on the drug price issue. Petition on “stopping greed of drug companies” attracted 2000+ signatures from our district. Griffith also talked about incivility in policy debates; he was pessimistic that any significant action would be taken before the election. Congress is too polarized. AARP does not interact with elected officials after September 1; careful to stay out of election process and try to be non-partisan.

Care Committee:

Leslie Pendleton is offering a Grief and Loss Support Group. She is planning a cancer support group and a Caregiver Support Group for later this fall. A motion was approved to add AARP Chapter as a supporting partner to these offerings.

Health Fair:

Leslie has been in correspondence with Tammy Caldwell to identify suggestions for improvement of the health fair based on their debrief of the 2018 event. She will start meeting with various key people and start the planning process soon. Anyone who wants to get involved, please let Leslie know ASAP. The health fair date is Sept 16, 2020.

Community Service:

Sally Anna Stapleton announced that there is a walk-a-thon supporting supplies for seniors, hosted by RSVP, Oct 10, 10:00-12:00. \$5 charge for participation. RSVP has several events/raffles – contact Sally Anna or RSVP for more info.

Finance:

Doug Feuerbach moved to Legislative position, so we need to recruit new members for the Finance Committee. Don and Jerry will work on this.

Membership:

Jerry approached Todd Solberg to help with greeting duties at our open sessions.

Newsletter:

Carolyn Rude prepared a detailed report. Coming issue will be a Sept/Oct issue, which may be longer. Items are due in the next day or two. She will be finishing the newsletter shortly.

Suggestion from Doug Feuerbach about taking a hike to Audie Murphy memorial on the Appalachian Trail in Catawba, about 12 miles out past Mount Tabor Road, then a half-mile hike. Nice hike and memorial site.

Minutes prepared by Pat Hyer, September 4, 2019