

## **AARP Blacksburg Chapter**

### **Minutes**

February 2, 2021

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

#### **Attendees:**

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Linda Correll, Todd Solberg, Chuck Burress, Pat Ballard, Kai Duncan, Judith Jones, Tom Hohenshil, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Carolyn Rude, Joy Herbert, Doug Feuerbach, Terry Wildman

President Leslie Pendleton called the meeting to order at 10:00am.  
Minutes of January 5, 2021 board meeting were approved.

#### **Reports:**

Pat Ballard, chapter treasurer, reported sending our annual financial report to AARP National. Pat also reported that the treasurer's books were ready for the Audit Committee. Otherwise, more memberships are being received for renewal, and our overall condition is good with money in the bank.

Tom Hohenshil, due to a schedule conflict, requested giving his report on the Operation Paperback project early in our meeting (note the earlier reference to this project in the January 5, 2021 minutes). Tom reported that books have been collected at our drop-off point at the Blacksburg Recreation Center, and that our chapter would be working with the VA hospitals in Salem and Beckley WVA. Tom reported that 90 paperbacks were delivered to Salem the previous week.

This began a somewhat lengthy discussion regarding the mechanics of Operation Paperback, following Tom's sense that we might be better served to move this project forward somewhat independently of the national project. Specifically, Tom suggested that books be collected periodically in two-week book drives instead of on an ongoing basis. He also reported that Operation Paperback nationally has some explicit restrictions on the types of books to be sent to veterans, and that books collected needed to be categorized across a very large list of categories. In short, it seemed that avoiding some of these complexities would be a good thing.

Judith Jones suggested that we might name our own version of the project "AARP Books for Vets." Others recommended advertising what we are doing in various community information sources. Pat Ballard recommended that Tom bring together a small group from the board to explore different options for this project. Meanwhile we are keeping our partners, Warm Hearth Village (Ellen Rorrer) and RSVP (Mandy Hayes) in the loop on our progress.

Regarding the Chapter's annual report to AARP National, Jerry Niles posed to Don Creamer that it would be helpful to preserve these reports in some accessible way such that subsequent

Chapter presidents could refer to them in preparing future reports. It was decided to append the current report to these minutes where it will be available on the Chapter website.

### **Warm Hearth Village Outreach**

- Leslie Pendleton reported that the raffle winner from the “Christmas Card” project has been identified as D. Francis.
- Leslie also reported that there has been some limited feedback from the above project indicating that the effort by our Chapter was warmly received.

### **Annual Audit**

- On this general topic Pat Ballard mentioned that she had purchased the Quicken program to facilitate her bookkeeping.
- Jerry Niles said that the Audit Committee will be meeting shortly to conduct the annual audit.

### **February Newsletter**

- Carolyn Rude reported that the current newsletter is ready to go to the printer, and that the current edition will be 4 pages.

### **Program Plans**

- Judith Jones reiterated her report from last month that programs are set through the month of April.
- Judith mentioned that a future program might be centered on the topic of senior housing in Blacksburg and surrounding areas.
- Linda Correll will be joining the program committee.

### **LLI Update**

- Jerry Niles reported that participation this spring is similar to the recent Fall semester.
- 85 individuals are enrolled in the “Great Decisions” course which is quite a bit lower than Pre-Covid participation.
- Currently there are 247 members enrolled in LLI with 530 seats taken across the various courses.
- The “free events” offered this semester are quite popular; numbers to come later.

## **Hosting Service**

- Don Creamer reported that there has been a cost increase in our web hosting service, going from \$485 previously to \$864 currently for a three-year subscription. Don has already paid for the new subscription.
- Don discovered that part or most of the price increase was due to the fact that we had previously been enjoying a promotional price.

## **Zoom Pro Account**

- Leslie Pendleton reported that she had purchased a Zoom Pro Account so as to better facilitate Chapter Zoom meetings. The annual price was \$157.
- Chapter members who have been facilitating Zoom meetings, and were Virginia Tech retirees, had been using the Virginia Tech Zoom account. However, not all Chapter members have this access. There was some discussion about the Chapter perhaps needing some independence from Virginia Tech with regard to Zoom accounts. No decision or policy has been set at this point.

## **Reimbursement Policy**

- Leslie Pendleton requested that the board discuss its reimbursement policy covering expenses occurred by board members on behalf of the Chapter. Current examples include Don Creamer's payment for our web hosting service, Pat Ballard's purchase of Quicken for her bookkeeping responsibilities, Leslie Pendleton's purchase of a Zoom Pro Account, and Lisa Moose's purchase of 500 Christmas cards for the Warm Hearth Outreach Project.
- The sense of the board was that all such expenses necessary for official board/Chapter business should be reimbursed in a way consistent with good bookkeeping practice.
- A motion was made and passed to reimburse board members for the above mention expenses.

## **Proposal – Health and Wellness Guide**

- Leslie Pendleton and Linda Correll described a proposal they created to produce a "Health and Wellness Guide" that would essentially compensate for the likely fact that the Chapter's biannual Health and Wellness Fair would have to be postponed for a second year due to the Covid-19 crisis.
- The specific proposal is somewhat detailed and was presented to the board in a one page word document. Areas to be covered in the *Guide* would include physical, social, emotional, mental/intellectual, environmental, and spiritual wellness categories.

- The discussion at this point focused on challenges, feasibility and next steps.
- Don Creamer recommended that the Board endorse the plan in general terms, which board members did do in a hand vote. More details to come in subsequent meetings.

### **Committee descriptions**

- Leslie Pendleton and Linda Correll returned to a brief item on the January 5 agenda, which was a plan to update our descriptions of committee/liaison roles, responsibilities and practices. The board was presented with a survey that committee chairs and liaisons are requested to complete by February 26. Linda explained that the survey could be completed as a word document or as a Google document.
- Additionally, the board received a document showing sample job descriptions for several board created committees such as fundraising, finance, board development, audit, and personnel.

### **Bylaws Committee**

- The board discussed forming an ad hoc committee to examine and update if necessary the Chapter's Bylaws.
- Judith Jones mentioned that the Bylaws should include any potential changes needed to "Robert's Rules of Order" when board meeting are conducted on-line, such as with the use of Zoom.

### **Local Housing Affordability**

- The board briefly discussed a topic often raised at meetings during the past several years, which is the steadily escalating cost of housing in the Blacksburg area. Part of this discussion centered on the domination of student housing construction in Blacksburg coupled with the lack of attention to affordable housing development, especially for seniors.
- The board heard that the current mean cost for housing in Blacksburg is in the neighborhood of \$450,000.
- Ben Crawford reported that delegate Chris Hurst is proposing a bill to limit construction of housing for students in Blacksburg, but no further details were given at this point.

### **Committee Reports**

- Leslie Pendleton and Chuck Burruss discussed sending framed copies of the Blacksburg AARP "proclamation in support of first responders and medical personnel" to selected locations in Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Reported in the January 5, 2021 minutes was that the *Proclamation* had been published in the December 19 *News Messenger*.

- Leslie confirmed that framed copies of the *Proclamation* are being sent to the following locations and entities:
  - Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad
  - Carilion New River Valley Medical Center
  - Commonhealth Senior Living
  - Community Health Center of the NRV
  - English Meadows in Blacksburg and Christiansburg
  - Heritage Hall
  - LewisGale Montgomery Hospital
  - MedExpress Urgent Care
  - Montgomery County Health Department
  - Town of Blacksburg Velocity Care in Blacksburg and Christiansburg
  - Warm Hearth Village
  
- Ben Crawford reported that AARP National has identified as an important policy topic the oversight of nursing homes.
  
- Terry Wildman raised as a point of discussion that folks in the vaccine categories currently receiving shots are having significantly different experiences as to how and when they are receiving information about how, when and where to receive shots. The board briefly discussed whether AARP Blacksburg should “weigh in” on this topic, with one specific concern being how elderly folks with limited technology resources and experience are getting the information and assistance they need. Carolyn Rude suggested that board members sent their “shot experiences” to her for possible inclusion as a story in our newsletter.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Submitted by Terry Wildman, Secretary