

AARP Blacksburg Chapter Minutes

September 7, 2021

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

Attendees:

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Linda Correll, Todd Solberg, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Doug Feuerbach, Terry Wildman, Carolyn Rude, Wendy Baldwin

President Leslie Pendleton called the meeting to order at 10:30am (*note: Meeting time for this particular board meeting was delayed a half hour due to the timing of LLI registration which opened at 10am*)

Minutes of the June board meeting were approved.

Announcements: A variety of announcements were shared as follows:

- Concern was voiced for Pat Ballard and partner Coreen Mett who is currently in hospice care.
- AARP National is not authorizing any in-person meetings greater than six persons through the remainder of this year. Obviously, this is one of the reasons the Chapter cancelled our picnic scheduled some time ago for September 17.
- Leslie Pendleton reminded members that our “health and wellness week” activities were cancelled for the same reasons.
- Leslie reported that the Coffee Chats were still on.
- Sally Anna Stapleton will no longer serve as chair of the Community Service Committee. This is a position that among other things coordinates the fall food drive.
- Allen Bame will no longer facilitate labeling and mailing the Chapter newsletter. Discussion followed concerning the process and time requirements for this activity.
- Chuck Burress will serve as Chapter Vice President for the remainder of this year.
- Jerry Niles, along with Leslie Pendleton and Don Creamer, are serving as the leadership committee and are requesting suggestions for persons who may be recruited for positions of responsibility and service within the Chapter.

Books for Vets: Tom Hohenshil continues to store some 1200 books collected for the program at his home. There is currently no word on when the Veteran Centers will be accepting book donations again.

Veterans Cemetery Ambassador’s Program: It was noted that Ambassador positions are available at the Southwestern Virginia Veteran’s Cemetery. Ambassadors agree to spend at least one day a month to assist with funerals. Ben Crawford noted that on occasion the volunteer ambassador is the only person at the funeral representing the Veteran being laid to rest.

Chapter Newsletter: An extended discussion took place regarding the Chapter newsletter and changes both to editorship and number of issues the Chapter will be able to publish. First, following the September board meeting where Carolyn Rude announced her intention to step away from the editorship position, the need now is to figure out a way forward. Carolyn reported that Tom Hohenshil is enthusiastic about assuming the role of editor, but this may be contingent upon reducing the number of annual editions to three. One issue with having fewer editions is that the newsletter has been one prime means of informing members of our monthly programs. However, considering the inevitability of fewer editions anyway, some discussion centered on alternate ways of communicating with members about programs and other news. Possibilities include using email and the existing “mail chimp” program currently in use. Board members expressed some comfort with scaling back the number of newsletter editions, even to three per year, but this was not unanimous.

Awards: Chuck Burress led a brief discussion of the various state and local awards process. Chuck proposed sending a nomination for Carolyn Rude for the Anders Award, the State AARP highest award given each year. The board voted unanimously to support this nomination. Chuck noted that the Chapter Service and Spirit awards will need nominations by the October board meeting. He also said that criteria for other state level awards will be forthcoming.

A brief break: At 11:35am technology intervened when President Leslie Pendleton disappeared from the zoom meeting. A brief discussion ensued about management of the meeting in her absence, but before that was settled Leslie reappeared at 11:42. The meeting continued.

Chapter Program Management when Using Zoom: One issue when using zoom for program meetings is the lack of conversation among meeting participants. One possibility of interest with zoom is to take advantage of a “break out” option where participants could be assigned to smaller groups, possibly led by a person charged with leading these smaller discussions. This notion met with mixed enthusiasm among board members, but was thought interesting enough to try on an experimental basis.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10pm.