

AARP Blacksburg Chapter
Minutes
May 7, 2019
Blacksburg Recreation Center

Attendees: Jerry Niles, Don Creamer, Terry Wildman, Sally Anna Stapleton, Isabel Berney, Doug Feuerbach, Leslie Pendleton, Tamara Hodsden, Pat Ballard, Wendy Baldwin, Pat Hyer, Judith Jones, Jeananne Bame, Jim Montgomery, Ben Crawford, Lisa Moose

Minutes for April 2, 2019 board meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Ballard reported that expenditure reimbursements are up to date. Recent transactions were related to the LLI/AARP BBQ and Bluegrass event and LLI programs (tours to DC, Wilderness Road Museum, and Glade Road Growing).

Announcements:

Leslie Pendleton attended the Caregivers' Meeting sponsored by AARP Virginia on April 24. Speakers shared personal stories of providing care and the frustrations they have encountered. Brian Jacks is soliciting caregiver stories to prepare for the General Assembly session next January. Collecting these stories is a nationwide AARP initiative with the eventual hope of impacting policies related to caregiving. Jerry suggested that we invite Tina King from the Agency on Aging to a fall board meeting to talk about caregiving in the NRV and its relationship to the national AARP initiative.

Jerry Niles distributed a fact sheet on some 950 AARP chapters. This overview fits with our discussion at the last chapter meeting.

Pat Hyer reported on the work of the Aging in Place Taskforce. A workbook was completed in 2017 and tested at several workshops, including at LLI. In the last year, the taskforce has developed introductory video content for each section of the workbook and a facilitator's manual. On June 11, 9:00-12:00, the taskforce will host 30 volunteer trainers to review the latest material and prepare for possible workshop offerings in the NRV. Pat submitted five names of interested LLI/AARP leaders to participate. Judith Jones also expressed interest, although she is not available to attend on June 11. The board was generally supportive of an initiative that involves offering the workshop to both LLI and AARP members, other AARP chapters, and regional organizations who request facilitation support. This project fits well with both chapter and national priorities and represents a very substantive service for the region.

Jim Montgomery asked the Jerry Niles be recognized for his award as Citizen of the Year from the Blacksburg-Christiansburg Rotary. He also wanted to express his gratitude for the excellent newsletters that Carolyn Rude prepares for our chapter. The last issue illustrates the breadth and sophistication of our newsletter, which is exceptional.

Old and New Business:

Leadership Development Committee: Don Creamer reported on the first meeting of the Leadership Development Committee. Leslie Pendleton, Jerry Niles, and Pat Hyer are also on the committee. The committee envisions a three-fold purpose: 1) recruit board members and officers on a continuous basis, 2) periodically orient new members to the chapter and its activities, and 3) promote member involvement in chapter activities/priorities. The committee agreed to send a welcome message to new members as they enroll and to conduct an orientation for new members at least twice a year (including those who have joined in the last two years). Jerry will send a special invitation to new members to attend the picnic and provide name tags for the event. The leadership needs of the chapter are an on-going conversation. Don will create a webpage that highlights duties of committee chairs to encourage more involvement in the committees. Don invited everyone to add names to the initial list of people we might invite to get more involved with our work.

Pat Ballard raised the question about mid-year membership renewals. Jerry recommended that we consider this as a policy issue in the fall.

Report on April Chapter Meeting: Leslie Pendleton distributed a summary of the April chapter meeting discussion and survey. Most attendees agreed that physical and mental well-being contributed to their sense of aging successfully. Chapter meetings are seen to contribute positively to their well-being. There were several ideas considered about encouraging further social interaction, including trying a different arrangement of tables at the next meeting. We might also create brief feature profiles of new members for the newsletter. Overall, the results reflect an affirmation of what we are doing. However, Jerry noted that those who attended this session tended to be board members and other active members, not the less-involved.

The report highlighted conversation about how to engage folks at Warm Hearth – bringing residents on bus to our meetings or perhaps hosting a talk there. Jerry and Don subsequently met with Tamara at Warm Hearth, who was already familiar with LLI and AARP. She will set up a town hall meeting in September to talk to interested residents about what AARP is doing. She was also positive about exploring carpooling and bus transportation for AARP chapter meeting.

Jerry urged board members to read through Leslie's summary and see if there are other insights that we might draw from the comments.

Judith Jones raised the question about the nature of our programming for the coming year, given the report and suggestions. Should there be a theme for the year? Or variety? Several expressed interest in variety, perhaps some programs focused on issues of aging and others that feature outstanding speakers on completely different topics.

Steppin' Out, August 2-3: Wendy Baldwin reported on conversations with Downtown Blacksburg Inc. which is rethinking some aspects of the annual event. They plan to collect non-profit organizations with similar missions together. We should be in the Farmer's Market area. Wendy will apply for a grant from AARP to help with expenses. Members discussed a possible display, slogan, AARP-branded items for give-aways, and other matters. Wendy expressed an interest in highlighting the distinction between the benefits of local membership and national membership. Sally Anna will circulate a sign up sheet at the May meeting and at the picnic.

Upgrading the Sound System: Jerry tested a wireless microphone and speaker at the last meeting to improve the sound system. He'll continue to test new options for another meeting and hope to purchase a system for AARP use in the fall, estimated to cost about \$350-400.

Committee Reports:

Hospitality:

Picnic: June 18. Ben Crawford will mention the picnic to Brian Jacks in an upcoming meeting.

May meeting: Doug Feuerbach and several others will take care of meeting hospitality duties at the May meeting in Terry's absence. Wendy or Jeananne will pick up 2 dozen donuts at Carol Lee on the way to the meeting.

AARP Virginia:

Ben Crawford will be visiting with congressional representatives in a week or so to talk about drug prices; this is part of the annual AARP congressional visit to the Hill. Ben urged us to promote participation in the NRV Senior Games for next year; Wythe County will host next year. The monthly Mt. Tabor Ruritan Fish Fry (fundraiser) starts this weekend, includes music. All are invited.

Awards:

Tamara Hodsden passed out the timetable for the state awards process. Any nominations for the awards are welcome. Please bring to the next board meeting and/or contact Tamara.

Community Service:

Sally Anna announced that at the May 21st meeting, we'll do a mothers' food drive; a list of needed items is in the newsletter.

Minutes prepared by Pat Hyer and submitted May 7, 2019.