

AARP Blacksburg Chapter Minutes

November 2, 2021

Meeting held by Zoom Conference

Attendees:

Don Creamer, Leslie Pendleton, Carolyn Rude, Todd Solberg, Chuck Burress, Kai Duncan, Ben Crawford, Jerry Niles, Doug Feuerbach, Terry Wildman, Carolyn Rude, Wendy Baldwin, Tom Hohenshil, Pat Ballard, John Burton, Fred Piercy, Judy Jones, Sue Hossack

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

Minutes of the October board meeting were approved.

New Board Members: The board welcomed new prospective board members Sue Hossack and Fred Piercy: New member John Burton was introduced at the October meeting. All three are retired and have significant records of achievement across long careers. Each will be integrated into various Chapter functions in the coming months.

Awards: Chuck Burruss reported on recent State and Chapter awards activity. First, Chuck reported that our nomination of Carolyn Rude for the prestigious Andrus award was reviewed in glowing terms at the State awards process, but another candidate was ultimately chosen for the award. Here at home Chuck led a chapter awards committee composed of Judy Jones, Wendy Baldwin, Don Creamer, and Terry Wildman to select candidates for the Community Spirit Award and the Chapter Service Award. For the Community Spirit Award Debbie Sherman-Lee was recommended for the award, and Sandy Birch was recommended for the Chapter Service Award. Following a brief discussion, the Board voted to approve both of these awards.

These awards will be presented at the December holiday luncheon and Chapter celebration. These awardees will be notified in advance and their lunch will be compliments of the Chapter. Ben Crawford agreed to have the award plaques prepared.

Treasurer's Report: Pat Ballard provided a brief report confirming a checking account balance of \$8,570, of which \$554 is LLI funds. Pat reported that memberships for 2022 are now being received.

Leadership Committee: Jerry Niles reported that the newsletter editorship is now settled with Beth Grabau and Sue Terwilliger serving as co-editors. Don Creamer reported that Sue Hossack, new board member, will provide technical expertise that will be beneficial to the running of the Chapter website, and she will also provide technical expertise on occasions where the Chapter may need to conduct meetings in hybrid format—face to face and zoom together. Don also reminded the board the Cindy Graham, who is now handling Chapter membership records,

would also be able to team up with Sue Hossack on matters requiring technical computer related expertise.

During this discussion on leadership and the recent introduction of new talent at the Board and committee levels, it was noted that various committees may need additional help. Examples include the program, awards, and membership committees. Folks interested in working with any of these and other committees are encouraged to contact committee chairs directly or any Chapter officer. Leslie also mentioned working on a welcome letter for new members, a goal that has been discussed several times in the recent past.

Prescription drug costs: Ben Crawford and Doug Feuerbach reported on various efforts by AARP to encourage congress to pass legislation authorizing Medicare to negotiate drug prices directly with drug companies. This discussion continued for a short while with various thoughts on whether letter writing is effective and whether personal stories about drug prices would have any effect on nudging the log jam in congress.

Americorps: Ben Crawford initiated a discussion on Americorps, the Virginia Service Commission, and the question of whether AARP at the local level should be looking for relationships with these service entities. Ben noted that following his discussions with Americorp in Virginia his impression was that they would welcome a relationship with AARP, especially given their interest in serving senior citizens. Ben is going to check with the State AARP office to see what they know about this matter.

Returning to in-person programs: Leslie Pendleton reported that our chapter will resume in-person programs in January. This prospect led to various questions regarding mask wearing (which would be expected when not eating or drinking), the possibility for conducting the meetings in a hybrid manner and the technical requirements for doing so, and the number of people allowed in a meeting room per AARP regulations and requirements at the Rec. Center. All of these questions will be further investigated.

Holiday Luncheon: The Chapter holiday luncheon and celebration will be held this year at Warm Hearth Village on Tuesday, December 14. Leslie, Don, Chuck and Terry met earlier with the Warm Hearth Village chef to discuss the menu, Covid protocols, technology needs, and a few other considerations regarding the luncheon. The board approved a cost per plate for the lunch of up to \$25.

Chapter highlights: Each year the program for the holiday luncheon also includes a listing of Chapter highlights for that year. The board briefly examined highlights listed from 2020, with the request that board members help with modifications for 2021.

Chapter contributions: Each year at the holiday luncheon the chapter makes donations to a range of non-profit community organizations. Following a brief discussion, the board decided to contribute to the same organizations as last year, and to allocate \$2400 total for the contributions. Pat Ballard noted that it has been three years since the Chapter has been able to

hold our traditional Health and Wellness event which has been the source of funds for these **contributions**.

Wreath laying ceremony: Judy Jones reported that the annual wreath laying ceremony at the Dublin Veterans Cemetery will take place on December 18 at 1:00pm. Transportation is available by bus from the Lions Club parking lot.

Program Committee: Linda Correll reported on behalf of the program committee that a number of program ideas for 2022 have been discussed, and that input from all of us would be welcome. Linda provided a handout showing that program ideas have been organized around four large themes: Health and wellness, local interests, where we live, and history. Under these themes a number of specific topics, as well as specific speakers have been identified.

Chapter awareness funds: Leslie Pendleton reported that a \$500 grant has been received from Virginia AARP. Discussion then turned to the question of what to do with the 2,000 books that were collected under our "Books for Vets" project. One idea presented was to build *small free libraries* to be located in areas frequented by veterans, such as VFW and American Legion sites. This idea will be pursued further.

Social time: Todd Solberg's request that the Chapter consider using small break-out sessions at our monthly public meetings was discussed again with the idea that members could share information of interest with each other that would not likely happen in large groups. While the idea was and has been positively received by the board no specific strategy has been put in place at this time.

Todd also expressed some concern that his attempt to organize and update nametags used at our monthly meetings has been frustrated by his not having a current, accurate membership list.

Standing rules: Linda Correll reported that the committee working on this expects the task of creating a revised set of standing rules for the Chapter will be completed soon.

Art Alley project: Ben Crawford reported that Brian Jacks has invited members of our chapter to participate in the AARP supported Art Alley project in Lynchburg. More information about this project will be forthcoming.

December board meeting: A question was raised as to whether the December board meeting would be held just prior to the December 14 Holiday Luncheon as in recent years. Leslie confirmed that the board meeting would be held on the first Tuesday, December 7.

Finally, it was confirmed that Jeanea Luck will be the speaker at the Holiday Luncheon. We do not know at this point whether she will travel to Blacksburg and present from Richmond via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50am

Submitted by Terry Wildman, Chapter Secretary