

# Northern Illinois Area 20 2021 Spring Assembly Minutes



**March 13, 2021**

**Online Audio/Video Meeting**

## **Meeting Opening**

Area Chair Carmela R. called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 13, 2021. The group participated in a quiet time followed by the Serenity Prayer. Carmela welcomed attendees and made announcements.

## **Total Attendees**

At the meeting opening 100 attendees were signed into the Zoom meeting. The breakdown of attendees is not available.

## **New Attendees**

Doug G., D70 GSR

Georgene R., D11 Alt GSR

Jane H., D11 Committee Chair

Jennifer P., D10 GSR

Matt S., D10 CPC Committee

Robin S., D22 Literature Committee

Ronna M., D80 GSR

Sheldon P., D40 GSR

Suzanne G., D43, Alt GSR

Linnie H., D28 GSR

## **Anniversaries**

Kelly L. – 1/25, 22 years

Barry M. – 1/28, 4 years

Michelle P. – 12/26, 17 years

Sue M. – 2/17, 8 years

Michael S. – 2/1, 9 years

Michael B. – 1/10, 15 years

Kristen F. – 1/25, 28 years

Allen J. – 2/6, 22 years

Richard H. – 1/26, 11 years

Marilyn F. – 2/18, 37 years

***Celebrating 215 years of sobriety!***

## **Approval of 2020 Fall Assembly Minutes**

Cheryl V. made the motion to approve the December 12, 2020 Winter Assembly minutes and Kate D. seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

## **Meeting Business**

### **Delegate's Report – Marilyn F.**

Welcome to Everyone. I hope that you are staying well.

Since the Winter Committee Meeting, I have attended the Conference of Delegates Past and Present. At that meeting I introduced Cheryl V. as our candidate for East Central Regional Trustee.

We will be having the Pre-General Service Conference Workshop on March 18 through March 21. More information to come.

I have received the background material in English for the 71st General Service Conference plus additional background material for the Trustees Committee. In total there are 1,485 pages of background material for this year's conference. We will be having the individual committee meetings the week of March 14 and then all

of the committees will get together on Saturday March 27th, 2021 to give their reports and discussion. I have also received 10 out of the 13 committees' background in Spanish. I will keep checking for background in Spanish for the Public Information Committee, Literature Committee and Policy and Admissions Committee.

I received an unofficial report from Area 19 regarding the 2020 Illinois State Conference (ISC) as follows: A check for the seed money was sent from Area 19 to Area 21. The total ISC 2020 expenses were \$591.72. Income was \$1,531.80. Final Revenue was \$940.08. This is not the official report though.

Greg T. left the position of General Manager effective February 1, 2021 and Stephanie L., Senior Director of Administration and Strategy, will serve as Interim General Manager effective immediately.

#### SOME NEWS FROM GSO:

*Fellowship Connection* – FNV was replaced by Fellowship Connection 2.1, which was launched on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. I received an email on March 4, 2021 letting me know that the Delegates will have view only access to Fellowship Connection. The Fellowship Connection team is gathering post-launch feedback from area registrar on how to improve the database. One topic that is prevalent on this assignment is the listing of online groups, specifically what information should be captured and their participation in the General Service Conference structure.

*Corrections* – The Winter version of “Sharing from Behind the Walls” was distributed to prisoners across the U.S. and Canada, along with requested books and pamphlets. Over 560 male inmates were matched January-December 2020 for the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS), 105 females were matched for the same period.

There will be four Virtual Forums in 2021, dates to be announced at a later date.

*Finance:* 2020 contributions revenue reached an all-time high of \$10,304,185, which is \$417,930 greater than the reforecast.

Gross literature sales revenue is \$9,098,578. Although gross sales did not reach the reforecast amount, cost of goods sold is only 28% of gross sales compared to a reforecast 35%. Therefore, gross literature profit has exceeded reforecast by \$113,607.

The revenue split between gross profit on literature sales and contributions in 2020 is about 37% literature/63% contributions whereas historically, the split is 58% literature/42% contributions.

Payroll and benefits expense is \$11,329,538, which is \$374,429 less than the reforecast amount of \$11,703,967.

Total expenses are \$16,667,870, which is \$45,195 less than the reforecast amount of \$16,713,065.

Cash Flow: Cash on hand as of December 31 was \$1,780,363.

The board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the Finance Committee: The budget for 2021, which reflects total revenues of \$15,594,000, total expenses of \$14,953,613 and a bottom-line surplus of \$641,387, be approved by A.A.W.S. Board.

#### *Publishing:*

Update on Digital Distribution: On January 14, 2021 A.A.W.S., Inc. officially launched its enhanced e-book and audiobook distribution implementation with Ingram CoreSource Plus, effectuating distribution via 38 major e-book platforms as well as 13 major audiobook vendors.

#### *International Licensing and Translations Activity:*

There are two new approved Big Book translations in Tatar (Russia) and Oriya (India). Alcoholics Anonymous, the Big Book, is now available in 73 languages, including the original English. “Our Great Responsibility” has sold over 43,000 copies and added nearly \$400,000 of gross sales revenue.

*You Tube* – There are 113 A.A.W.S. videos posted to YouTube (some in English only, others in English, Spanish and French). As of January 2021, we have over 5,400 subscribers. The digital media content creator continues to make progress on fixing the closed captioning on Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book) for the ASL videos.

*Google Ads* – A.A.W.S. Google Ads went live December 16, 2020. The total grant spent as of January 14, 2021 is \$4,560.46. The performance statistics are 3.19K clicks, 24.5K impressions, and \$1.43 Avg CPC (cost per click). Within the account are two ad groups. Find a Meeting continues to see greater attention and engagement with 2,573 clicks than Get Help with 613 clicks.

*AAWS and AAGV* - Grapevine and La Vina continue to face challenges.

The “Carry the Message” project has experienced growing acceptance in the Fellowship. So far 621 subscription requests and certificates were either fulfilled, or not yet redeemed to AA members behind the wall and others.

In the Spring of 2021, La Vina anticipates publishing “Voices of Women” in Spanish. Also, at that time, Grapevine hopes to publish a Prison Book, titled “Free on the Inside.”

*International Convention*- 2020 Detroit: Insurance had been bought to protect the investment in the activities around the event for \$57,507. It took some time to arrive at a settlement with the insurance carrier and here are some results:

Original International Convention Budget:	\$5,518,520
Registration fees Contributed to GSO (7th tradition)	\$40,324
Amount initially received from insurance:	<u>\$ 971,092</u>
Amount subsequently received from insurance:	\$1,181,042
Final insurance settlement:	\$2,152,134

After paying the remaining contractual expenses from the International Convention, the balance will be distributed/allocated to GSO, AAWS and AAGV to cover in-office expenditures (i.e., salaries, lost revenue from sales and registration, legal fees, etc.).

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn F. – Area 20 Delegate

My total expenses for 2021 to date: \$73.70

Marilyn added that the Operating Committee and Finance Committee have approved a \$480.00 expenditure for Adobe Acrobat Professional for two computers—hers and one other. The Operating and Finance Committees will report on this expenditure later in the assembly.

Discussion:

A member asked if the insurance covered the expenses of the International Convention. Marilyn replied that it did.

A member asked why Greg T. resigned as GSO General Manager. Marilyn did not know why he did.

**Pre-General Service Conference Workshop Preparation – Chris D., Alternate Delegate**

The purpose of the NIA 20 Pre-General Service Conference Workshop (PGSCW) is to inform the Delegate of the Area’s opinion on agenda items to be considered at the General Service Conference (GSC) that our Delegate Marilyn will attend in April 2021. Our delegate is our link between the groups as represented by the General Service Representatives (GSRs) and the GSC. Chris gave information on the process we use to inform the Delegate, and an overview of specific instructions and materials to be used for this year’s PGSCW, including breakout sessions that occur the week before the PGSCW on March 27, 2021. He noted that some of the items

on the agenda were carried over from the 2020 GSC because of the shortened schedule last year resulting from the pandemic restrictions in place.

Discussion:

A member asked what workshop breakout he should attend to have input on the agenda item about registering online meetings at GSO. Chair Carmela answered that he or anyone else with a question about which breakout to attend could contact Delegate Marilyn, Alt Delegate Chris D. or her about that after the meeting today.

**Treasurer's Report – Dawn B.**

**Balance Sheet**

The QuickBooks Balance Sheet summarizes our assets, liabilities and equity (equity is assets minus liabilities) incurred during a specified period. See the NIA website for the full Balance Sheet for the period from January 1, 2021 through March 13, 2021.

Summary – 1/1/21 through 3/13/21

Checking account balance: \$24,620.86

- Operating funds balance: \$20,056.36
- Restricted funds balance: \$4,564.50 and consists of:
  - "Pink Can" \$3,715.36
  - "Green Can" \$849.14
- Savings account balance: \$23,514.00 (Prudent Reserve)

**Profit and Loss Statement**

The QuickBooks Profit and Loss Statement summarizes the revenues, costs and expenses incurred during a specified period. See the NIA website for the full Profit and Loss Statement for the period from January 1, 2021 through March 13, 2021.

Summary – 1/1/21 through 3/13/21

- Total Contributions: \$10,019.83
- Total Expenses: \$3,849.03
- Net Operating Income: \$6,170.80 which is the amount that our income exceeds our expenses in 2021

**Miscellaneous**

- The 2020 Big Book Conference bank account is whole at 2,500. With contributions received, the donations over seed money for the Big Book Conference are \$379.47
- We have begun to have PayPal donations come through. The address for PayPal is on the NIA website. It is: [treasurer@aa-nia.org](mailto:treasurer@aa-nia.org). Please clarify if this is a personal, meeting, or District donation. If it is a meeting donation, please clarify meeting number or day/time/location so that we may credit the correct meeting.
- I'm planning a Treasurer's workshop on April 24 for District Treasurers to exchange ideas on how they do their job.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn B., NIA Treasurer – Panel 70 [treasurer@aa-nia.org](mailto:treasurer@aa-nia.org)

Dawn added that she had received the check from the 2020 Illinois State Conference for our portion of the income exceeding expenses from the conference. That income is split evenly between the three Illinois areas.

There were no questions or discussion about the Treasurer's Report.

### Approval of 2020 Winter Assembly Treasurer’s Report

Kate D. made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Chris E. seconded the motion. The Treasurer’s Report was approved by a majority of those voting.

### Alternate Treasurer’s Report – Allen J.

Allen shared the NIA Contributions Statement for the period January 1, 2021 through February 19, 2021 on his screen. The complete report with itemized contributions for the period is posted on the NIA website.

#### Contributions Summary – 1/1/21 to 2/19/21

Date deposited	(All)
Row Labels	Sum of Contributions amount
(blank)	
Green Can contribution	\$107.24
Pink Can contribution	\$650.36
Group contribution	\$8,163.57
District contribution	\$1,357.45
Personal contribution	\$498.81
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$10,777.43</b>

Allen reminded the assembly that personal contributions are listed anonymously. He said that PayPal has a fee for transactions plus a small service charge, which reduces contributions slightly. Payments made through PayPal, therefore, generally will not show as a “dollars and 00 cents” amount in the report.

#### Discussion:

A member asked if the Area could use Zelle, which is a bank app and has no fee, instead of PayPal. Dawn said she can look into using Zelle.

### Operating Committee Report – Chris E., Chair

At the first meeting of this committee on March 5, 2021, Chris E., D22 DCM was elected chair of the committee and Sue M. was elected alternate chair. The committee approved the purchase of Adobe Acrobat Professional for two computers. One program will go on Delegate Marilyn F.’s computer; the other user is to be determined based on need (Area officer or possibly Archivist). The committee’s approval was communicated to the Finance Committee.

### Finance Committee Report – Karen F., Chair

Karen reported that the Finance Committee approved the purchase of Adobe Acrobat Professional for the Delegate’s computer and one other computer.

She said that 35 contributions to the Area had been made through PayPal since it was activated on the NIA website. She reminded people using PayPal to put the group name and number on the submission form for groups or an email address for receipt confirmation if it is a personal contribution.

#### Discussion:

A member asked why both the Operating and Finance committees had to approve the Adobe Acrobat purchase. Carmela explained that it was because the purchase price was between \$250 and \$500. The Operating committee can approve only purchases up to \$249 without additional approval from the Finance committee.

### **Ad Hoc Committee on Returning to Meetings Report – Erik L., Area Alternate Chair**

Committee member Susan H. said the committee had met to discuss requirements for reopening in-person meetings. These requirements have two parts: logistics and technical issues. The committee received a document from another area that they have used when groups are having group conscience conversations about reopening in-person meetings during Covid. The ad hoc committee liked this list and will use it when the time comes for the Area to discuss reopening our assemblies and committee meetings.

#### Things to Be Consider When Reopening In-Person Meetings

- Communicate in-person meeting expectations
- Contact tracing
- Expectations for personal protection equipment
- Social distancing
- 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition
- Coins, anniversaries and birthdays
- Coffee, snacks and garbage
- Literature
- When some members want to meet in person, and some are not able to meet in person, the use of parallel meetings (separate online and in-person meetings) or hybrid meetings (combined in-person and online meetings)

Discussion of these items will have to take into consideration state, county and town regulatory guidelines at the time we want to hold the meeting. This is a general overview without specifics because we don't know the specifics yet.

Erik L. commented that at this stage of the pandemic, the committee is tracking state guidelines. We are not looking to create new policies for in-person safety; we will be following the state recommended guidelines. We are making sure that when we do meet, we will be following the recommendations given by the government. We are not ready to meet in person per the Illinois recommendations—our meetings are too large.

#### Discussion:

A member asked about the outside meetings status of Lord of Life Church in La Fox where we have met in the past. Eric said Lord of Life is not ready yet for outside meetings.

Another member indicated that he attends meetings at Lazarus House homeless shelter in St. Charles that use rules similar to the ones Susan listed for A.A. meetings. Those meetings generally have 10 to 14 people attending.

### **Ad Hoc Committee on Document Management – Christy B., Area Secretary**

We have gotten up to speed with Zoom at the Area level, and now it is time to get up to speed with the Cloud. This committee is about file sharing and storing beyond the website for the Area, as well as getting our Archives more accessible for the Area fellowship.

I have a strong committee assembled. We have not met yet, but I have a list of items to discuss prepared to send them and we will have our first meeting in April.

### **Conference Advisory Committee – Eric L., Area Alternate Chair**

The Conference Advisory Committee (CAC) has met independently and with the Returning to Meetings ad hoc committee. Some changes to the recommended conference guidelines are needed. They are formulating a

motion to submit at the Summer Assembly to give more responsibility to the Area Committee in getting conferences started. This could start with the 2022 Illinois State Conference that our Area is responsible for hosting. Despite any new responsibilities delegated to the Area for conferences by approval of this motion, any district that wants to step up to host the Illinois State Conference or other upcoming conferences will be welcomed. Hosting is a powerful experience for a district, as Erik knows from his experience with hosting the 2019 State Conference. **Bottom line: We must host the 2022 Illinois State Conference!**

Discussion:

Chair Carmela said that the CAC did the work to find venues for the 2022 State Conference, and asked any DCM that is interested in hosting the State Conference to reach out to the CAC.

**2021 Big Book Conference Report – Rich H. and Georgene R., Co-Chairs, District 11**

We had our first meeting on January 23rd. We have had two meetings up until now and will have our third next Saturday March 20th. Our first order of business was to vote that the 2021 Big Book Conference Hosted by District 11 will be a virtual event and to possibly have a live event if the situation allows. Followed by narrowing down available dates using ours and neighboring calendars and choosing October 30, 2021 as the date for the Area 20 Big Book Conference. Next, we had elections, and everybody present was voted to a position or asked to help with a committee. We also came up with a Save the Date Flyer soon after that first meeting. At our second meeting we elected an Alternate Treasurer. Our Treasurer and Alternate Treasurer are up to speed with the Area 20 Big Book Conference Checking Account, and both are signatories on that account. This account is one of many necessary Guidelines updates we hope to be able to present to the Assembly when the Conference is complete. At our last meeting we used an altered version of Third Legacy Procedures to select our theme. We had 14 submissions, and after the first round we eliminated all the themes with zero votes. In the second round we had seven possible themes and we selected with better than 2/3 majority “164 & Much More” as the theme for our Conference. We have no guidelines or written past experiences for putting on a virtual conference, but our Committee is excited to tackle the challenges to be presented to us.

Past Area 20 Archivist Ray M. found some past Big Book Conference Flyers and Programs, and a couple Final Reports. We received contact lists from the two previous Conferences so our Committee Chairs can reach out for some past experiences.

Our Program Committee has asked William S. to be our Big Book Historian Speaker. He is an author on this topic and our Committee has asked our Program Chair to talk to him about not promoting his book during his talk. We hope The Program Committee comes to the table next week with a possible second speaker and a theme for the panels. Those panels will be filled per our Guidelines, and they were looking at past programs, looking at what Districts participated most and least over the years, trying to assure good rotation. We are also working on a Program that will include participation from our Spanish Speaking Districts. And the Program will also have Spanish Translation.

Our PI Committee has sent our Save the Date Flyer to District 11 and Area 20 Webmasters and will distribute to other neighboring Areas.

Our Literature Committee is now the Literature/Grapevine Committee. We don't want to have any unplanned downtime between panels, and we are hoping to use this Committee to fill any blank spots that may occur between Panels with some interesting Literature/Grapevine information.

We are looking at how to utilize all our Committees and our Committee Members in this new virtual world. And to also keep everybody engaged up until the Conference. This may present an interesting challenge that we are up to. There are no Guidelines or written shared experience from Area 20 to work with, but we are ready to put in the effort to put on an interesting Conference for all of you to attend and enjoy.

We have asked some technology skilled people to join us at our next meeting. AMOT Audio will be taping our Conference and has offered to take care of all our Zoom needs for that day. They have been taping and helping with Zoom Conferences, Workshops and Meetings since soon after this pandemic started. They have taped and assisted with hundreds of Conferences and thousands of meetings.

Because of things I've seen on Social Media, I asked our Committee what they thought about our event being posted/promoted on Social Media. I also asked Conference Liaison Erik to ask The Conference Advisory Committee about this topic. I believe the response was unanimous to stick to conventional methods of getting the word out on the Big Book Conference. Any of you that know me well would know these thoughts do not break my heart.

Upon the completion of this year's Conference, we hope to have a list of updates for the Big Book Conference Guidelines.

Rich and Georgene  
2021 Area 20 Big Book Conference

#### Discussion:

A member asked if there were past Big Book conference guidelines. Rich responded that there are only guidelines for an online conference that they have not received yet. Karen F., 2020 Big Book conference co-chair, said Brett C. was their secretary and has lots of information about that conference available if they want to contact him.

Another member asked if the conference was going to be a half day or full day, and asked if the date of October 30, 2021 has been confirmed. Rich replied that the schedule will depend on the availability of speakers and panels, so it has not been confirmed yet. The save-the-date flyer has times listed as 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Most likely, the conference will run from 9:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., but that is currently tentative. Rich confirmed the date of Saturday, October 30, 2021.

A member recently attended the Illinois State Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ISCYPAA) conference that was held online and suggested that Rich and Georgene contact the planning committee for recommendations on holding an online conference. Rich knows some people on the ISCYPAA advisory committee and will contact them.

## **Officers' Reports**

### **Alternate Delegate – Chris D.**

#### **Welcome to the 2021 Spring Assembly!!**

First off, thanks to all for attending our Spring Assembly. Once again, we find ourselves at this event without a surrounding Spring Conference and now, we get to add PANDEMIC to the mix as well! Hopefully, both of these situations are remedied once and for all in the near future...

It's AA "busy season" and as such I've been pretty occupied helping to collate the background material which has been provided by our Delegate and distribute it to the Area. Similar to last year this material has been provided to the Area in the form of a Highlighted Agenda Items List (provided by Marilyn) with Dropbox links to the committee background material embedded in the document. Additionally, I've been involved with other "scheduling" activities both for today's Assembly as well as for the upcoming PGSCW Zoom breakout meetings which are intended as a prelude for the actual PGSCW workshop on 3/27.

Speaking of Zoom meetings, I was honored to be invited to the recent Conference of Delegates Past & Present (CDPP) and attended that day-long event last month. As "Alternate Delegates" we're often not allowed to speak

or offer much at that event, but this year was special, and we were actually allowed to participate (albeit very briefly). Well, we got say hello and ask a few questions...

An additional resource that has been available recently is the creation of a U.S. Alternate Delegates Zoom meeting that meets once a month on the first day of the month. This gathering of Alternates Delegates has no “official” business but provides an excellent opportunity to get to know one another and to hear about issues and opportunities that are occurring across the country. As is always the case in AA, I continue to find “we are not alone”, and all of us are grappling with very similar issues.

I’ve also been in recent contact with 2 of the 3 Hispanic districts in our Area and continue to offer support and encouragement wherever requested. I know I echo the sentiment of the entire Area when I say we are committed to supporting this vital element of our fellowship however we can.

Please also remember I remain available to assist (or conduct) Service Orientation workshops for Districts or Groups. These would be Area sponsored events and as such the Area would cover any associated costs.

2020 Reimbursement Requests – I have no reimbursement requests since my last report.

Respectfully submitted - Chris D. – P70/A20 – Alternate Delegate

### **Chair – Carmela R.**

Wow – 2021 is moving right along. Can you believe we have been meeting virtually for an entire YEAR already? Boy, I can’t wait to see all of you when it’s safe, of course.

Some things I've been up to:

- Host meetings of the Area Officers – started in July, carries on monthly.
- Finalizing Illinois State Conference Policy documentation.
- Adjusting our 2021 Calendar as needed.
- Working to find servants to both elected and appointed open positions.
- Managing our Zoom accounts – activated two additional rooms to accommodate Pre-GSCVW breakout sessions, service committee meetings and conferences.
- Set up new signer for the BBC 2021 Treasurers.
- Joining District meetings to share experience, strength, and hope and NIA 20 updates.

What’s coming up:

- Pre-GSCVW breakout meetings
- Officer meeting and May committee meeting prep – next Officer’s meeting is 4/7/2021.
- Focus on key areas:
  - Technology committee - Zoom support, file sharing, building committee
  - 2021 and 2022 conference planning support
  - Active committees – using our Zoom account(s) to meet + build area calendar
  - Support increased engagement and participation
    - Survey our Assembly to gather feedback about our meetings
    - Talk about it with you
    - Send me your feedback and ideas

### **Expenses to date: \$631.70.**

2/23/2020 report total = \$631.70

- PPB04 Winter committee meeting \$30.24
- PPB09 Conference for Delegates Past and Present (CDPP) \$601.40

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Respectfully submitted, Carmela R.  
Area Chair, [chairperson@aa-nia.org](mailto:chairperson@aa-nia.org)

### **Alternate Chair – Erik L.**

Well, AA still works very well, even in the midst of a crazy year like 2020. As Bill aptly says on page 15 of our book, “it is a design for living that works in rough going.”

Since our last Assembly December 12:

- Attended the first two BBC '21 Planning Committee Meetings on January 23 and February 20. This year's event should be great as the host committee, chaired by Rich H., is off to a great start.
- Attended the 3rd meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on “Return to Meeting In-Person” Feb 22. In addition to the 6 recommendations previously given at the Winter Assembly, we are still evaluating state guidelines, so we have a plan to meet in person when that becomes possible.
- Attended a meeting of the Conference Advisory Committee in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Committee. The CAC will be formulating a motion to be presented at the Summer Assembly whereby we recommend that Area 20 take a more active role in the hosting and planning of the Spring Conference and the Illinois State Conference in the years that Area 20 hosts. The purpose of the motion is to have a consistent way to assure that we have a timely plan in place to support these events and lessen the responsibility of an individual district having to facilitate these area events.
- Attended the District 40 business meeting on January 29 and gave a brief presentation on responsibilities of being a GSR. Thanks for the invite Gordon!

Best regards and see you Saturday!  
Erik Long Alt. Area Chair

### **Registrar – Carol H.**

Welcome to the Spring Assembly, hope you all enjoy your day of sharing sessions focused on service at the Group, District and Area level. As your area registrar my responsibility is to maintain the General Service Office (GSO) database called Fellowship Connection (FC), with contact information of all Groups and their GSRs or mail contacts, Northern Illinois Area (NIA) Service Committees and the roster of Trusted Servants in each of the Districts. In January and February, area registrars were finally provided training and FC access. There has already been a new release of FC and they are working feverishly to improve the system.

Most recently, GSO has provided read-only access to the Area Delegate and District Committee Members (DCM) so they will have the opportunity, if they choose, to reach out to the new AA groups who are in the 30-day delay period to welcome them, and to provide contact information. Chris E, DCM from District 21, has already used this opportunity to submit over 40 changes and updates for the groups and service positions in his district. Now every DCM can run their own reports and submit changes to the area registrar. In the long term, there are possibilities for further reports, such as quarterly contributions. All of this in an effort to connect and help to strengthen the communication between the area, districts, and groups.

With the new year comes the rotation of eight DCM's and district service positions. If you are a new DCM or District Committee Chair/Alternate, please complete and submit the appropriate forms to [registrar@aa-nia.org](mailto:registrar@aa-nia.org) so that communication remains current. The area roster is being sent for contact purposes to the area committee; in previous years paper copies were available at assemblies. Please review them for accuracy and report updates and changes as soon as possible.

The group changes forms and new group forms have been coming in at a very steady pace in the last month. Please keep in mind that an email address must be provided for any changes in FC, and that we cannot register virtual only meetings. If your meeting has changed to a hybrid meeting you do not need to send that to the registrar or GSO. That information is maintained by your district. Not all service positions are maintained by GSO, but we have our own records for the area. Please continue to report any changes or updates.

Hopefully after the 71st General Service Conference, we will have some answers as to how the new world of our virtual platform meetings will fit into the General Service structure. Our motion from the December 4th Winter Assembly regarding the registration of virtual meetings was added as an agenda item. We will be discussing this and other items for this conference committee at the Policy & Admissions breakout session next Friday night March 19th from 7:00 – 9:00p.m. Please use this link [Policy & Admissions Breakout Session](#) to join us, also found on Carmela's March 11th email. The background material can be accessed here: [Policy & Admissions Background Material](#).

Remember all forms can also be found on the aa-nia.org website. <http://aa-nia.org/group-forms/>. **All communication of changes and updates should be sent to the [registrar@aa-nia.org](mailto:registrar@aa-nia.org) mailbox or mailed to Area Registrar, PO Box 524, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0524.** Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol H., NIA Registrar – Panel 70, [registrar@aa-nia.org](mailto:registrar@aa-nia.org)

#### Discussion:

Chris E., D21 DCM has already checked the registration corrections he submitted to Carol and still has questions about how the corrections were made. Carol will discuss this with him offline.

A member asked if a virtual group could use a member's home address for registering with GSO. This is a work-around for now, but it is not GSO's recommendation.

#### **Alternate Registrar – Rob M.**

Rob reported that he is supporting the Registrar's work and getting online registration experience. He is setting up the PGSCW breakout Zoom meetings, and is a member of both ad hoc committees.

#### **Secretary – Christy B.**

I have been working with Karen F., our recently elected alternate secretary, to help her get up to speed on her duties. She is doing a great job. I have also been working on preparing the 2018 through 2020 assembly and committee meeting minutes for archiving in paper and PDF electronic format, as well as collecting the MP3 audio recordings of these meetings for archiving. I will also be working with Webmaster Earl to make sure we have the approved minutes for each assembly and committee meeting correctly saved on the website. I am chairing the Ad Hoc Committee on Document Management and plan to have committee recommendations to present at the Summer Assembly in June.

We will be electing a new Area Alternate Secretary at the Panel 72 elections at the Fall Assembly. I would appreciate if DCMs would share that I found becoming Area Alternate Secretary was a good way to get started in Area service—as are all the Alternate positions.

#### **Alternate Secretary – Karen F.**

Karen has received one update for the District Meetings List so far. If anyone else has updates, please send them to [alt-secretary@aa-nia.org](mailto:alt-secretary@aa-nia.org).

Discussion:

A member asked if it was possible to get the login information for virtual district meetings added to the District Meetings List. Karen thought it was a great idea. Registrar Carol said that the information for the list came from the Area committee roster. If DCMs will advise Karen and Carol of the virtual meeting information, they can figure out how to add it to the list.

Alt Delegate Chris D. said that in the DCM meeting he recently attended, the DCMs decided against posting virtual meeting information on the list. They are in favor of having interested members call the DCM for the information to make sure it is the current information because Zoom IDs, etc. can change from meeting to meeting. Also, the DCMs were not sure how long the pandemic restrictions would last when they decided not to post the virtual information.

## **Education Workshops**

Breakout education workshops for GSRs, DCMs, Service Committee members, and Administrative Committee members and appointed Area positions were conducted from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. followed by a lunch break.

## **Ongoing Business**

Chair Carmela gave instructions for elections to be conducted for open Service Committee positions. The assembly decided use simple majority vote elections for these positions.

### **Open Positions Elections – Service Committees**

Accessibilities Committee Area Chair

No one stood for or was nominated for the position.

Accessibilities Committee Area Chair – Alternate

This open position was not considered because no one stood for or was nominated for the Chair position.

Public Information (PI) Area Chair

Ed M., currently serving as PI Alt Chair and DCM, D91 stood for the position. A member asked if this would be a disservice to either the DCM or PI Chair position if he did both concurrently. Ed acknowledged the conflict, but said he was still willing to serve. Some additional discussion ensued. At the conclusion, Ed said he would withdraw, and remain as Alt PI Chair.

No one else stood for or was nominated to the position and it remains open. Until it is filled, Ed M. as Alt Chair will “fulfill the responsibilities of the Service Committee chair in his or her absence” as stated on page 57 of the *Northern Illinois Area 20 Service Manual*.

Answering Service Committee Area Chair – Alternate

No one stood for or was nominated for the position.

Archives Committee Area Chair – Alternate

Dennis R, D21 GSR, stood for the position. The issue of double service duty was raised because he is a GSR. After some discussion, Dennis withdrew and will attempt to get someone else from his group to stand for GSR. If he does, he will stand for the position at the Summer Assembly.

BTG Committee Area Chair – Alternate

No one stood for or was nominated for the position.

#### CPC Committee Area Chair – Alternate

Michelle P. from D80 stood for the position. No one else stood for or was nominated for the position.

Michelle gave her qualifications. Her sobriety date is December 26, 2003. She has been an alternate GSR, GSR, district secretary and district CPC chair. She currently holds no positions other than serving on an ad hoc committee for workshops.

Votes in favor of Michelle P. = 55 (100%)

Votes opposed to Michelle P. = 0 (0%)

Total votes = 55

Michelle P. was elected to the position of CPC Committee Area Chair – Alternate.

#### Grapevine Committee Area Chair – Alternate

No one stood for or was nominated for the position.

Elections for the remaining open service committee positions will be included on the Summer Assembly agenda.

### **Bids for 2022 Spring Assembly Conference and 2022 Illinois State Conference**

Chair Carmela said the Conference Advisory Committee (CAC) had done some work on identifying venues and discussed having the Area take a more active role in organizing these conferences. The CAC will have more about their work at the Spring Committee Meeting in May.

### **Service Committee Reports**

#### **Accessibilities**

Both Chair and Alt Chair positions are currently open.

#### **Answering Service – Tracy F. / Alt Chair is vacant**

Tracy has gotten the Area map printed for distribution. He helped the Rockford district with their new answering service after the Rockford Intergroup Office closed. Districts 71, 72 and 73 have combined their answering service into one service out of Freeport. Tracy used his experience from District 71 to help Rockford.

#### **Archives – Jeff K. / Alt Chair is vacant**

This report is updated in conjunction with the Area Spring Assembly (virtual) on 03/13/2021. Since the last NIA20 Archives Committee Report submitted in December 2020:

- Archives committee chair (Jeff K) has been in touch with several Districts archives committees that requested assistance or input for local archives projects. Specifically:
  - District 28 (Peggy G) – questions re inventory, classification, and retention
  - District 90 (Aaron M) – questions re inventory, retention & archives resource tools
  - District 64 (Ed W) – discussion/input re converting cassette tapes to digital audio
- The Archives committee received and reviewed (and is now holding) many *Concepts* and *Box 549* back issues that were donated to Archives by an AA member who got in touch via email to the Archives Committee link on the Area website.
- Archives committee chair prepared visual material for an Archives display shown during the 2021 DuPage County Open (virtual) held on 02/20/21. The theme was “Four DuPage County AA Districts – Working Together for 40 Years,” using Area and Local archives materials to show how Districts 40, 41, 42 and 43 have cooperated in service work since District 4 subdivided into four districts in 1982.
- The Archives committee remains committed to carry out its service responsibilities by:

- Assisting and supporting the Area Archivist as needed
- Facilitating Area-wide archives committee meetings/communications between the Area assemblies – Based on info provided at the Spring Assembly Service Committee breakout session, the archives committee will be discussing how to set up a useful archives committee page on the Area website
- Hosting Area-wide archives-related “long-timer panels” or similar workshops in 2021 (planning underway pending further discussion)
- Continuing to be go-to resource for district/local archives committees re district level archives workshops, local archives collection issues, etc.
- The Area-wide Committee has been in communications (via email) to review Archives items on the 71st GSC Final Agenda and prepare for discussing those at the Archives zoom breakout meeting on 03/21 in advance of the Pre-GSC Workshop on 03/27.
- The Committee still needs someone to step up for Archives Alternate!

IN CLOSING – During this full-year-still-counting pandemic, many of us may have some extra “stay at home time” to clean and reorganize closets, drawers, and file cabinets. The Committee would like to remind everyone to consider Archives before you toss out any of that old AA stuff! That “stuff” might have a new home with Archives. Any group secretary, treasurer or GSR ledger books; group phone lists; old flyers about AA-related events or workshops; meeting directories from days of yore – these and similar items may be useful to Archives. So please get in touch with your local District or Area archives committee before deciding what should or should not go to the recycle bin!

In service, Jeff K – NIA20 Archives Chair March 12, 2021 (updated 3/13/21)

### **Bridging the Gap – Kevin A. / Alt Chair is vacant**

Kevin has contacted Webmaster Earl about updating the BTG page on the website. With help from the Corrections committee and CPC committee, BTG is working on getting letters about A.A. out to parole officers.

### **Concepts – Robert S. / Kris S.**

Not present

### **Cooperation with the Professional Community – Jeff L. / Michelle P.**

Jeff is looking forward to participating in the PGSCW breakout session for CPC and to working with Michelle P. as his alternate chair.

### **Corrections – Scott M. / Mark H.**

Basically, we continue to be denied access to most of the jails and prisons where we carry the message. That said, apparently DuPage County jail has resumed letting volunteers into their facility. McHenry and Kane County jails continue to be locked down as does Sheridan and Stateville prisons.

In October, we were able to virtually facilitate AA meetings at Sheridan prison. This was a collective effort on the part of the volunteers and Chaplain McClimans at Sheridan. Unfortunately, on November 6, another outbreak of Covid occurred and the residents were once again in lockdown. When I corresponded with Chaplain McClimans about 2 weeks ago, he still had no timeline as to when we may be able to resume our meetings.

There has also been a slight uptick in the Pen Pal program. While this is not the optimal way to reach those behind the walls, it is a valuable resource. I for one began doing this about a year ago and it has been a huge growth opportunity for my program. How to get involved with corrections correspondence is available on the NIA website.

### **Grapevine – Susan H. / Alt Chair is vacant**

Susan is presenting topic of the month online workshops for Grapevine. This month's topic was "Making Amends" and included some information on how to navigate the Grapevine website. Next month's topic is "Having Fun in Sobriety." Sandy C. and Terry from District 40 are helping her.

Discussion: A member asked if the workshops had only been held in District 40, or if there were going to be ones in other districts. Susan said that she is getting help from District 40, but all these workshops are Area-wide and online so anyone in the Area can attend.

### **Literature – Kimberly T. / Phil M.**

Kim is looking forward to the PGSCW breakout session next weekend. It will be a long session because of the number of agenda items to be discussed, and there will be breaks. She invited people interested in digital newcomer packets to attend the breakout.

Discussion:

A member asked if the digital newcomer packets were available now or coming soon. Registrar Carol H. responded for Kim that they are available now.

### **Public Information – Chair is vacant / Ed M.**

Alt Chair Ed M. has contacted the district PI committee chairs about participating in the PI PGSCW breakout session. He is working on preparing for the breakout session now. Past Delegate Rich H. and Webmaster Earl N. will attend the breakout.

Discussion:

Chris E., D21 DCM, commented about the Big Books and pamphlets his district has placed in local police stations as a suggestion for PI work in other districts and wanted to know if any other districts have experience with this. He said it is good to give the police stations notice that you are coming to get your foot in the door when delivering books. Ed M. said this is good PI work and it could also involve CPC.

### **Treatment Facilities – Lisa S. / Richard H.**

As we approach the one-year mark of the onset of the health care crisis, this has been a time of reflection as we look both back and forward to the work of carrying the message into treatment facilities. We are well into the new year and volunteer access to treatment facilities remains a challenge across Northern Illinois Area 20. However, these challenges are not without both small and significant victories, thanks to the persistent efforts of trusted servants working together in both Treatment and Bridging the Gap (BTG) Committees across northern Illinois.

Treatment centers not associated or affiliated with a hospital healthcare system have demonstrated a wider use of in-person volunteers since the state implemented Phase 4 without any mitigation measures at the end of January. Many of these residential inpatient treatment centers are allowing, encouraging, and actively seeking in-person volunteers. COVID-19 health protocols for these volunteers vary widely, from temperature checks, screening questions (both written and/or verbal) and signing in and out not only for accountability but for contact tracing. In some hospital affiliated treatment centers, volunteers continue to carry the message virtually where there is online patient access. Others are allowing limited in-person volunteer opportunities.

What remains one of the greatest needs is connecting patients with an available A.A. member through BTG opportunities. While treatment centers are working on COVID-19 health compliance protocols and a safe return to bringing back the A.A. fellowship to carry the message to their patients within their facilities, those who are being discharged need to find A.A. It's not realistic to expect they are going to find it on their own. If we are not able to be fully available inside treatment facilities to share our experience about A.A. outside of

treatment, when individuals leave the facility, they are disadvantaged, especially during COVID-19 where the world of virtual meetings can be confusing to a newcomer. There are opportunities for collaboration, cooperation, and partnership between Treatment and BTG today like never before.

One of these opportunities presented itself recently on a larger scale with an invitation to participate in a virtual US/Canada Treatment Forum involving Treatment and Bridging the Gap Chairs exchanging information and sharing best practices on carrying the message into treatment centers from Brooklyn, NY to Maui, HI. Treatment Chairs in Alberta, Canada addressed Canada's federal law, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), as comparable in many ways to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the United States. Also discussed is the use of state supported and funded recovery coaches and their role/responsibility within the context of A.A. sponsorship. The group will meet again virtually at the end of the February to discuss Conference agenda items to better inform district treatment chairs and communicate information back to their respective areas. Following the meeting in February the group will meet quarterly. Both myself and Alternate Treatment Chair Richard H. were part of the inaugural meeting and we look forward to being a part of the ongoing quarterly sessions as well.

In love of service,

Lisa S.  
NIA 20 Treatment Chair

Richard H.  
NIA 20 Alternate Treatment Chair

## **Administrative Committee Reports Not Previously Given**

### **Archivist – Cheryl V.**

Nothing to report

### **Electronic Equipment – Joe B.**

Not present

### **Report and Charter Committee**

Nothing to report

### **Service Manual Custodian – Cheryl V.**

Nothing to report

### **Technology Committee – no chair elected yet**

Webmaster Earl N. reported that he and Alt Registrar Rob M. are the only active members on the committee. They are also active on both currently meeting ad hoc committees.

### **Website Administrator - Earl N. / Alternate Eric B.**

Earl reported that he gave Area Archives Chair Jeff K. access to the website to update the Archives committee page. Other committee chairs can get access to update and use their committee pages. Earl is available to help if the committee chair is not tech savvy. He discussed the possibility of getting group changes to districts, area and GSO all at once. District 21 is working on an automated system to send updates to all three levels at one time.

Please send items you want posted on the website to Earl, following the "Website Policies and Guidelines" posted on the "NIA Guidelines" page.

## **Meeting Closure with Open Mic**

### **Open Mic:**

Chris E. announced that there is an all-you-can-eat corned beef dinner at the Stillwaters Alano Club in Barrington tonight.

Clare B. announced that District 28 is having an open speaker meeting on April 3, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. It will be on Zoom.

Rich H. announced that the Three Legacies Group in Crystal Lake will have Mark E., our East Central Regional Trustee who is just finishing his term of office, as speaker at their 5th Sunday meeting on May 30, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Linnie H. announced a new meeting in District 28. The group name is Language of the Heart and it is going to be a permanent online meeting. Because it is a new meeting and will be permanently online, it has not been registered yet and she needs a packet of new group materials. She is working with Registrar Carol on the registration.

Chair Carmela has posted a meeting survey link in the chat. She asked the 70 attendees still on the meeting to complete the survey.

### **Adjournment**

Chris E. made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Kevin A. seconded it. Carmela R., Area Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m., and the AA responsibility statement was recited.

The Summer Assembly will be held virtually via Zoom on June 26, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

*Christy B.*

Northern Illinois Area 20 Secretary