

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

March 9, 2018

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, March 9, 2018, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, NY, NY. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Richard P., welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

General Manager's Report

General Manager Greg T. provided the following report:

Administration – Planning continues for the 68th Conference, with the translation of General Service Conference background material approximately 85% completed for distribution on or about March 1, as per the schedule.

Administrative Services – Records staff continues to work on updating the influx of group and service position records submitted for changes. In addition, the International assignment conducted its annual sweep of information of the International G.S.O. entities. The response from International G.S.O.s regarding their contact information, approximate number of groups and members in their countries establishes what is reported in the directories under the “Outside U.S. & Canada” category of the total Groups and Membership numbers.

Archives – One of the main projects in Archives over 2018 is to digitize Bill's personal correspondence, originally organized by Nell Wing, G.S.O.'s first archivist, and including Bill's letters on a myriad of subjects such as, finances, criticism, the General Service Conference, publicity, and more. There are also collections of letters between Bill and Dr. Bob and other significant figures including Father Ed Dowling, Sister Ignatia, Rev. Sam Shoemaker and others. The project includes preserving the original documents and creating user copies for researchers.

Human Resources – Lola Ibrahim began her role as the executive assistant to the general manager, director of Administration and Services and secretary of the A.A.W.S. Board on Tuesday, February 20. The French editor/translator position in the Publishing department has been offered to Juliette L. Juliette is a native French speaker with editorial and translation experience in the magazine and book publishing fields. In addition, Frank Brown, a temporary employee, was hired as an IT support technician.

Performance Review forms were updated and distributed to all management and supervisory personnel. Presentations were also conducted for all managers and supervisors in order to present and discuss the new ratings for performance evaluations. All salary sheets have been prepared, updated and distributed to the supervisors and managers.

Information Technology – The new ERP system contracts have been signed with vendors and implementation is under-

way. A new version of the backend of the bulk-order online bookstore, known internally as the B2B site, was implemented in the last week of February. Now, both B2B and the consumer ecommerce site, known internally as B2C, are mobile ready/available.

February – March Travel:

February 15-16: Boston Central Service Office, Boston, MA.

February 23-25: Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly, Cromwell, CT.

Staff Report

Communication Services – The assignment continues work on the implementation of the new aa.org website, the A.A.W.S., Inc. YouTube channel and the development of website analytics.

C.P.C. – As liaison to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, the C.P.C. coordinator attended their quarterly Advisory Council meeting.

Corrections – The assignment requested sharing from local corrections committees for a FAQ sheet for the Corrections Kit; experience between local committees and corrections administrators, the utilization of online and Grapevine materials, and emerging technology that may have changed how local committees carry the message at various correctional facilities was also requested.

International – Preparations continue for the 25th World Service Meeting; 62 delegates representing 41 countries or zones have responded.

Literature – Ongoing contact is being maintained with all current area, district and intergroup/central office literature chairpersons.

Nominating – Resumes for regional trustee elections and final board slates have been prepared for review by the trustees' Nominating Committee and forwarding to the Conference Committee on Trustees.

Public Information – The video PSA “I Have Hope” has had 796 million views between February and December 2017, ranking it 35th out of 1,500 PSAs monitored over the year by an outside organization.

Regional Forums – Preparations continue for 2018 Regional

Forums, including eBlast notifications to trusted servants and group contacts. Regional bids for 2021 Regional Forums will take place at the Conference in April.

Treatment and Accessibilities – A new appointed committee member with a background in the Armed Forces (U.S. or Canada) is being sought to serve on the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The TCS Committee reviewed the minutes of G.S.O.'s Website Committee, along with progress reports and updates on G.S.O.'s A.A. website analytics.

Oral reports were given by the director of I.T. Services and the Group Services assignment. The director of I.T. Services noted that the International Data Map is being updated; office PCs will soon be upgraded to Windows 10; meetings have been held across all departments regarding implementation of the new ERP system, with a possible October 2018 target for implementation. The Group Services coordinator reported that the office is collecting information on database utilization; A.A. Guidelines are being revised as needed; and the second of four proposed informational calls was held with three Intergroup Seminar representatives and G.S.O. personnel.

The committee discussed a proposed A.A.W.S./G.S.O. app and reviewed a report from the Additional Channels of Communication with the Fellowship Subcommittee. It was agreed that A.A.W.S. staff will look into questions of licensing regarding the current "Meeting Guide" app and develop an RFP (request for proposal) for vendors.

Clickstream analytics were reviewed for the "Need Help with a Drinking Problem" page on aa.org; the Website Design Committee gave a brief progress report; and a progress report on the YouTube launch was provided, noting that following the 68th General Service Conference in April, additional communications to the Fellowship about the channel will be scheduled.

The Board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the TCS Committee:

- That a basic A.A. app, to include the Meeting Guide, Big Book, Daily Reflections and Alert/messaging capabilities, be launched in conjunction with the new A.A. website.

Publishing

The committee accepted the Publishing Department report, highlighting the following information:

Gross sales: January gross sales are above budget with actual gross sales at \$1,360,791, which is a \$11,173 (or .83%) positive variance against budget of \$1,349,618.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for January stand at \$833,159, which accounts for about 62% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily intergroup/central offices and other bulk orders) for January are \$585,205, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$247,954.

Digital books: Total e-book gross sales for January stand at

\$21,036, with 5,337 units distributed.

Holiday Special Offer: The four-book "History Shelf" provided net sales of \$33,000, with 1,100 total sets sold (940 English, 24 French, 136 Spanish), representing 4,400 total books.

Publications Audit: A comprehensive publishing process audit has begun within the Publications department to provide recommendations and costs for implementing new and emerging industry-wide publishing and distribution best practices in: production (editorial and printing), warehousing, order and sales fulfillment and digital distribution.

The committee discussed the pricing and production of large print pamphlets and reviewed samples of a new "Anonymity in the Digital Age" placard which will be made available to the Fellowship. (The placard is already available as a PDF download on aa.org.)

The Board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the Publishing Committee:

- That the redesigned large print pamphlet "A.A. for the Older Alcoholic" be priced at \$.40 per unit in English, French, and Spanish.
- That the "Anonymity in the Digital Age" placard be made available in the small (8-1/2" x 11") size at \$8.50 per unit and the large (15" x 24") size at \$14.50 per unit.

Finance

Finance report summary: Revenue – For the month of January, total revenue was \$42,804 ahead of budget and \$39,226 less than the same period last year. In total, the number of units sold of books, pamphlets and other sales items has increased from 2017 by 3,151 pieces (1.97%). This led to gross profit from literature being ahead of budget by \$28,503, but \$35,845 less than the same period last year. Seventh Tradition contributions in January were \$14,300 ahead of budget, but \$3,335 less than the same period last year.

Expenses – For the month of January, total operating expenses were \$27,733 (1.89%) higher than budget and \$204,837 (15.83%) higher than the same period last year. Salaries were \$7,146 over budget and \$109,522 ahead for the same period last year. However, this variance can be attributed primarily to the hiring of eight additional employees after January 2017. Additionally, writer's fees were \$7,092 ahead of budget and \$73,108 ahead of the same period last year, due largely to the ASL project (Big Book and "Twelve and Twelve") that is underway.

Income – Total income for January 2018 was \$143,308, compared to a budgeted income of \$128,237, and actual 2017 income for the same period of \$387,371.

Following a discussion of finances, the committee heard a report from the Ad-hoc Self-Support Committee, which met in February and reviewed all additional committee considerations that were proposed by the 2017 Conference committee. The committee suggested updating the online tutorial for members wishing to make online/recurring contributions and considered developing a letter for delegates, D.C.M.s, and others in service regarding online/recurring contributions. An update of the Seventh Tradition Fact Sheet (F-203) was also

considered along with providing more communications to delegates and the service structure regarding contributions.

The Board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the Finance Committee:

- That a donation in the amount of \$2,162,827.83 be made to the General Service Board General Fund to cover the 2017 G.S.B. deficit.

- That a transfer of \$1,400,000 of excess cash be made to the G.S.B. Reserve Fund.

Internal Audit Committee

The committee discussed development of an RFP for the engagement of an outside counsel to review the applicability to A.A.W.S. of the European General Data Protection Requirement Act, along with a review of required standard operating procedures for a number of functional areas as articulated by the committee.

Additional Topics

Literature discounts, handling charges and pricing: A report was provided outlining the subcommittee's work as it relates to publishing, distribution and pricing best practices. With additional support from Bob Slotterback and nontrustee director

Deborah A., a deeper analysis will be conducted. The committee discussed potential collaboration with the Grapevine Board and the possibility, if feasible, of a joint shopping cart for both corporations.

Service Material: The board discussed a letter from a member of the Fellowship requesting that the 68th General Service Conference consider ceasing production and distribution of the yellow "Safety Card for A.A. Groups." The board took no action on this request and will respond directly to the writer of the letter. Additionally, as all service material is routinely evaluated and updated based on current input from the Fellowship, an internal group of G.S.O. staff and personnel will review the card in detail.

Daily Reflections video project: Four different vendors submitted proposals for development of the Daily Reflections video project and Unikron, Inc. was recommended as the project vendor due to their compelling proposal and reasonable pricing. The project would provide renewable content in various formats that could be used on the website and app, for an audio book, or as content for the YouTube channel.

The Board approved the following recommendation:

- That the Daily Reflections video project proceed at an estimated cost of \$174,835.