

April 19,2023

2023 Spring Committee Meeting

Delegate's Report

Welcome to the 2023 Spring Committee Meeting!!

Greetings Area 20! The major news for today's report will center around my recent experience at the 73rd General Service Conference. I was in New York from April 20 – April 29 and have much information to report back! Today however will be a high-level overview with my detailed report happening at the Summer Assembly.

I will be giving a full report at the Summer Assembly on June 17 in LaFox and also already have commitments to do shortened reports as shown below.

- Thurs. Jun 1 D11 - Woodstock / Crystal Lake
- Tues. Jun 20 D21 - Palatine

To the DCM's - Please let me know if you would like to schedule a date and time when I can visit your District (or event) to give a report, and keep in mind I will be on vacation around the July 4th holiday from July 1 – July 10 so will not be available on those days.

I have already begun writing the report for June 17 and am surprised at just how much detail there is! I anticipate the full report and presentation lasting between 2-3 hours so hopefully our Area Chair can accommodate me on time that day! As we did last year, I have asked our General Service Board Treasurer Kevin Prior to attend and present the finance portion of the slide deck and then be available for questions and have also invited General Service Trustee Carolyn Walsh to also be available should there be questions, I cannot address. I'd guess she would be available for 60-90 minutes as well.

Earlier this week GSO posted the final advisory actions and committee considerations on the dashboard which are linked below. Once again, advisory actions are recommendations that came out of a conference committee which were voted on and PASSED on the floor of the General Service Conference and committee considerations are more or less "suggestions" from the committee which although can be discussed on the floor; have no vote, but are taken into serious consideration by the General Service Board.

- [Conference Advisory Actions 73rd](#)
- [Committee Considerations 73rd](#) (Show Google)

As for the overall experience and especially with regard to activities early in the week, the conference was very different than last year and had within it a somewhat anxious element regarding what would happen when the "Trustee Issue" was addressed, but as it turned out that wasn't discussed until Thursday so there was plenty of time to reflect amongst ourselves and let the presence of our Higher power reveal himself in our daily meetings. More on the "Trustee Issue" later. In the meantime, for this report, I'll try and simply summarize what I saw as the big takeaways from the conference this year.

Plain and Simple language Big Book-

Although the “official” presentation and discussion didn’t happen until later in the week, all the Delegates were assigned specific times when they were able to review the available chapters (which was the first 6 chapters) so we could form our own opinions. My assigned time was Thursday morning (at 6:45) and I took notes on the chapters I read and will share all of those in the full report. Below are two committee considerations on the subject.

- The committee reviewed a progress report regarding the translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth Edition) into **plain and simple language** and agreed with the general direction of the project. The committee requested that the project continue to move forward and that a draft or progress report be brought back to the 2024 Conference Committee on Literature
- The committee discussed **new proposed agenda items (PAI’s) related to the plain language Big Book translation** and **took no action**. The committee acknowledged the concerns of members, groups and areas in the Fellowship regarding the oversight of the process of a translation of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* (Fourth edition) into plain and simple language. The committee noted that these concerns will be addressed at a **special session during the 2023 General Service Conference**

Grapevine App

There was great anticipation and several questions regarding the development of the new GV app, as well as questions regarding the funding mechanisms that allowed the development to proceed. Those instruments included the reductions in the subscription liability fund as well as an approved \$500,000 draw from the reserve fund. This discussion (in my opinion) was one of those things where it was more about the money and less about the need for the service. Full details will be in my final report in June.

Finance

2022 Actual Results vs. 2022 Budget

The audit of 2022 financial statements was completed on April 10, 2023, and accepted by the GSB Audit Committee on April 12. All 2022 numbers cited in this report are audited.

For the year 2022, the GSO had an operating deficit of \$1,579,305 compared to a budgeted operating deficit of \$855,032. The cause of the deficit was the increased cost of printing and shipping literature. Cost of goods sold was \$6,901,151, 28% greater than the budgeted amount of \$5,390,000.

Operating expenses were \$17,489,639, almost exactly the same as the budget of \$17,569,432. The GSO’s largest expense, salaries and benefits, was \$9,701,831, slightly less than the budget of \$9,849,446. Professional fees were \$1,756,363, about 6% less than the budget of \$1,868,458.

Gross literature sales were \$11,999,441, about 9% more than the budget of \$11,000,000. Additionally, due to increased costs caused by supply chain disruptions, the expense of printing, shipping, and storing literature was \$6,901,151, compared to a budget of \$5,390,000.

Contributions were \$10,548,525, about 4% less than the budget of \$11,000,000. Operating revenue (after subtracting cost of literature sold) was \$15,910,334, 5% less than the budget of \$16,714,000.

| GSO ACTUAL VS. BUDGET | 2022 ACTUAL | 2022 BUDGET | DIFFERENCE |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | (1,579,305) | (855,032) | (724,273) |
| Operating Expenses | 17,489,639 | 17,569,432 | (79,793) |
| Salaries and Benefits | 9,701,831 | 9,849,446 | (147,615) |
| Professional Fees | 1,756,363 | 1,868,458 | (112,095) |
| Gross Literature Sales | 11,999,441 | 11,000,000 | 999,441 |
| Cost of Literature Sold | 6,901,151 | 5,390,000 | 1,511,151 |
| Contributions | 10,548,525 | 11,000,000 | (451,475) |
| Operating Revenue | 15,910,334 | 16,714,400 | (804,066) |

2023 Budget

The 2023 budget has an operating surplus of **\$505,841** compared to an operating deficit of \$1,579,305 in 2022. 2023 operating expenses are budgeted at \$18,285,749 compared to \$17,489,639 in 2022. The increased operating expense is due to fully staffing the translation, licensing and intellectual property department, the language services department, and the staff services department.

2023 operating revenue is budgeted at \$18,791,320 compared to \$15,910,334 in 2022. This increase is expected to come from literature sales via an increase in items sold and a price increase which went into effect on April 3, 2023. Gross literature sales are budgeted at \$15,900,000 in 2023 compared to \$11,999,441 in 2022. Contributions are budgeted at \$10,500,000 for 2023 compared to \$10,548,525 in 2021.

| GSO 23 BUDGET VS. 22 ACTUAL | 2023 BUDGET | 2022 ACTUAL | DIFFERENCE |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Operating Surplus/(Deficit) | 505,841 | (1,579,305) | 2,085,146 |
| Operating Expenses | 18,285,749 | 17,489,639 | 796,110 |
| Operating Revenue | 18,791,320 | 15,910,334 | 2,880,986 |
| Gross Literature Sales | 15,900,000 | 11,999,441 | 3,900,559 |
| Contributions | 10,500,000 | 10,548,525 | (48,525) |

Trustees Committee discussions-

The Conference Trustee's Committee approved all the slates as submitted and recommended they all be approved. Discussion went on for hours. Most initially appeared supportive, with a sizable minority opposed. Some thought that as individuals all the trustees were all ok, but that they couldn't seem to work together as a team. This was reinforced by the explanation as to why the vacancy for the Chair was still there.

Regarding the position as Chair of the GSB three "Highly Qualified" candidates were interviewed, but the board could not coalesce around one. Much of the discussion around the approval of the slate was very emotional, some angry, some highly supportive. Question was asked, "What happens if we don't approve?", with the answer being that we would have to vote on each candidate individually. A delegate mentioned "I know Trustees normally try to remain silent at Conference, listening, but we need to hear from you now. Tell us you can work together, that you can come together as a team." Two did, one Class A and one Class B, and both apologized for the dysfunction, promising to do better. Vote was shortly after that. The slate was approved with a vote of **107 to 25**. I voted in favor. The next three votes to approve the GSB officers, AAWS board and Grapevine board were all approved (103-28, 107-23 and 114-19 respectively.) with me voting in the affirmative in each case.

There was also a floor action that was made to censure the GSB.

- The 73rd General Service Conference censure the GSB due to *poor communication* to the Fellowship regarding the resignation of the former Chair of the GSB and for the process that was followed regarding the acceptance of her resignation.
 - *Motion to Decline received majority but not substantial unanimity 76-55. Much heartfelt discussion followed-*
- Some of the comments during that discussion are shown below-
 - Conference Trustees Committee did not recommend censure.
 - We don't approve of this behavior, make a statement.
 - Spiritual principle of forgiveness and healing
 - Feel bad for those who've been lobbied and lobbied hard.
 - This impacted me. But it wasn't done to me.
 - Intent behind censure is to create change. Change is already happening.
- *In the end the motion to censure the GSB was Not Approved. Final Vote 25 to 104. I voted against.*

Trust

There were several references throughout the week regarding “trust” (or a lack of it) which according to several delegates had been wanning because of the actions of January 29 which resulted in the GSB deciding to accept the resignation of the then Board Chair Linda Chezum. To that end, I thought I would include the 2 decisions below. The first is a recommendation from the Conference Agenda Committee and the second was a floor action.

- The Conference Committee on Agenda recommended that the **General Service Conference conduct a thorough inventory** of itself during the 2025 General Service Conference and that a Conference Inventory Planning Committee be established by the General Service Board to develop a comprehensive inventory plan, timeline and cost estimate, to bring forward to the 2024 Conference Committee on Agenda for consideration.
 - **Approved** – *A lot of Discussion. How to fit in? Workshop time used last time.; Logistics to be worked out by Committee. Vote 99 to 32*
- In an effort to improve communication, ensure Board policies are reflective of our principles, and reestablish a relationship of trust between the General Service Conference, the GSB and the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, the GSB is asked to undertake an inventory prior to the 74th General Service Conference. To assist the Board in this endeavor, the 73rd General Service Conference will establish a working group to aid the General Service Board in formulating possible inventory questions – **Approved**

The inventory motion was a fascinating process, watching minds be changed through discussion. Initial Motion to Decline to Consider. Vote **79-52** (majority but not substantial unanimity). Discussion began with some of the following points made-

- 73rd to establish a working group. How? Select a few people representative of the body.
- Trustee "We need some time".
- Process - GSB ratifies actions after conference and meets in July to start implementing?
- Cumbersome to have the body assist. Board has its own identity.

- Don't feel it's necessary.
- Need a professional trained in that regard - A Trustee
- Another trustee supports.
- Motion to Amend: Conference take an Inventory as Well - Already an Advisory Action to begin that process. Motion out of order.
- Professionals on inventory are in this room.
- How will working group be established?

Question Called and Vote in favor was **74 to 51**. A significant change from the Motion to Decline (almost the exact opposite), but not substantial unanimity. Minority opinion was heard-

Minority Opinion:

- Agreed with Interim Chair that this would send a message to the fellowship. (Me)
- Board needs an inventory and doesn't want to do one.
- What are we afraid of?
- Have to go back to Area's and say the Conference is doing an inventory but the board isn't.
- We often don't want to shine the spotlight into those dark areas.
- Members up in arms are serious. This is meeting them halfway.
- Opportunity to move forward and we say no.

There was then a vote to Reconsider – Reconsider Vote was 112 to 19.

No more discussion, I called the question and then we voted. Vote on the Motion **118 to 14**. From a position of less than majority support we went to an overwhelming majority. And the math says at least some of the trustees voted in favor! Finally, there seemed to be a sense of relief in the room with the mood lifting.

For the most part, the trustee discussions did not happen until Thursday and Friday, so these were mainly end of conference discussions. Prior to that though, the entire week was one of constant surprise, coupled with an enormous sense of responsibility, humility, and gratitude. I will be forever grateful to Area 20 for their support and confidence in allowing me to serve their as Delegate to the General Service Conference. As a final reminder, I'm more than willing to visit any district at pretty much any time so do feel free to let me know if you would like me to visit. In the meantime, if there are any questions, I'd be happy to try and address them.

Respectfully submitted-

Chris D.
 Delegate
 Area 20 / Northern Illinois
 Panel 72