

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

January 29, 2021

The A.A. World Services Board met via videoconference on Friday, January 29, 2021.
Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Beau B., welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

General Manager's Report

Interim General Manager Stephanie L. provided the following report:

Archives

Archives staff is preparing to relocate 300 cartons (392 cubic feet) of archival materials currently housed at an Iron Mountain facility, to a secured, onsite storage room on the 8th Floor. This relocation will significantly reduce Archives expenses and allow the Archives staff to appraise the unprocessed materials, deaccession any duplicate records and other related tasks.

Human Resources

Amy B. joined GSO Staff Services team as a GSO Staff member on the CPC/Treatment assignment. James H. joined GSO Staff Services team as a GSO Staff member on the Regional Forums assignment. Sareen Pearl (nonalcoholic) joined the Human Resources department as HR Director. Bruce Hartley (nonalcoholic) joined the Technology Services department as Senior Project Manager.

Operations

Fellowship Connection 2.1 launched on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. Getting a training video and a Frequently Asked Questions PDF uploaded to Fellowship Connection is currently in progress. New area registrars will be required to complete training before receiving access to Fellowship Connection 2.1.

Technology Services

ERP implementation is complete as of December 2020. The Technology Services team continues to play a key role in several projects: ERP Project Core Workstream supporting the Launch of Merchant-E and Lockbox; the Corrections Correspondence System revision project. The Technology team designed, developed and rolled out a new version of the Dashboard. Significant Technology Services activities are underway to improve cyber and data security using SolarWinds RMM, SolarWinds EDR, Bitlocker and File Vault.

Staff Services

Accessibilities/LIM – The staff secretary continues passing along the shared experience available on the Accessibilities

Committees Service web page as well as in the assignment's digital files. The Remote Communities Service page will soon be available on the aa.org website. The page will include relevant literature and access to useful links for service work.

Conference – The Conference Communications Kit was made available to all Conference members starting January 5, 2021. The kit includes the list of preliminary Conference committee agenda items, committee assignments and buddy lists. The new Committee Assignment Application implementation was a success and produced randomized committee assignments for all incoming Panel 71 delegates, meeting all the policy requirements requested by the General Service Conference for this process.

CPC/Treatment – The new coordinator continues training, including the preparation of the Quarterly GSB meeting, responding to requests from CPC committees and committees who are interested in exchanging information and experience with Treatment committees throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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 CCS, 105 females were matched for the same period. There were 1,390 Insiders/Outsiders linked.

Group Services – The new coordinator is continuing to work with the Fellowship Connection team gathering post-launch feedback from area registrars 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. The assignment continues seeking shared local experience, gathering feedback from the OIAA (Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous) and awaiting guidance from the General Service Conference.

International – The 26th World Service Meeting held a follow-up “Gratitude in Action” Sharing Session and a special virtual tour of Stepping Stones on December 12, 2020. Currently the International desk is working with the Publishing department to produce the 26th World Service Meeting Final Report. The report will be published in an anonymity-protected digital format; no print version will be produced.

The 27th WSM will be held in Tokyo, Japan, October 1-6, 2022 and the theme will be “Carrying the Message of A.A. in the Digital Age.”

Literature – A significant amount of committee support has taken place since October, including for a subcommittee of the trustees’ Literature Committee (TLC), the 2020-21 Conference Literature Committee, handling of proposed 71st Conference agenda items and preparations for the A.A.W.S. Publishing Committee as well as a wide variety of preparations for January 2021 meeting of the TLC.

Nominating – The coordinator of has begun work with the Conference coordinator on the trustee elections that will take place at the virtual 2021 General Service Conference.

Public Information – “Alcoholics Anonymous Holds Virtual World Service Meeting — First Time in History,” the most recent press release was placed on the press/media page December 21, 2020 and distributed in PDF to U.S./Canada General Conference members, central/intergroup offices and to 62 International GSOs. In February, all Panel 70 and 71 delegates will be sent a memo via email outlining the Procedures for Anonymity Breaks at the public level. Included with the memo are sample letters that can be sent with relevant A.A. literature (or email links) on anonymity. Also included will be the revised, Memo to Audio Technicians; formally titled, Memo to Tapers... (“What’s a ‘Taper’, Mom?!”)

Regional Forums – The new coordinator joined the planning already in progress for the four 2021 virtual forums. The assignment will also be included in the planning for the North-South Forum – a pancontinental virtual Forum targeting remote communities in Argentina and Canada. Under the purview of the International assignment, it is anticipated that this one-day forum will take place in May 2021.

Finance

Revenue and Expense:

Individual/A soft close of the December books was done on January 15. As of the soft close, we have a small 2020 surplus of \$210,917 before depreciation.

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 bank balance as of the close of business on January 20 was \$1,475,772, which represents four weeks of expenses, about a week and a half more than a month ago.

Ad hoc Self-Support Committee – The chair gave a brief update on the Self-support subcommittee noting discussions on the contributions envelope and the move to Lockbox services with the bank. The Lockbox will change the P.O. Box for contributions, which will necessitate redoing the business reply envelopes. It was noted that the business reply envelopes currently used are only valid in the U.S. GSO Staff are considering using Canadian business reply envelopes. The committee also discussed flyers that focus on self-support.

The board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the Finance Committee:

- That the budget for 2021, which reflects total revenues of \$15,594,000, total expenses of \$14,952,613 and a bottom-line surplus of \$641,387, be approved by the A.A.W.S. Board.

Publishing

Update on Digital Distribution: On January 14 A.A.W.S., Inc. officially launched its enhanced ebook and audiobook distribution implementation with Ingram CoreSource Plus, effectuating distribution via 38 major ebook platforms (including Amazon, Apple, B&N, Kobo, Google Play books, BibliU, Hoopla, Libreka, Libri, Mackin Education, Scribd, and Overdrive): as well as 13 major audiobook vendors (including Audio Apple, Audible, Audio Kobo, Audio Google Play, Hummingbird, and Storytel).

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.

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

- That the draft updated pamphlet, “Frequently Asked Questions about A.A.,” be forwarded to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

- That the draft updated pamphlet, “Is A.A. for You?” be forwarded to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

- That the draft updated pamphlet, “Is there an Alcoholic in Your Life?” be forwarded to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

- That the draft updated pamphlet, “This is A.A.,” be forwarded to the trustees’ Literature Committee.

- That the draft updated pamphlet, “Members of the Clergy Ask about A.A.,” be forwarded to the trustees’ Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment-Accessibilities Committee.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The committee reviewed the minutes of G.S.O.’s Website Committee, along with progress reports and updates on website analytics and activity reports.

The senior manager of the Communication Services department gave an overview on the past year’s projects. The

department looks forward to in-house video production, improved organization-wide communication, expanding the Meeting Guide to include online meetings, and enhanced strategic planning for the department.

Progress report on Website design and Meeting Guide app – Staff Services, Finance and Publishing teams reviewed and approved copy and content for the website. All pages (including low priority) are on track to have final approval by the end of this month. The content team is now focusing their attention on other website content and features such as: AA Near You, Media Assets and FAQs. HelpDocs was purchased and initial work has begun on building this out as self-service knowledge base portal.

YouTube – 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. The total grant spend as of January 14 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.

The board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the TCS Committee:

- That the 2020 Fourth Quarter Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- That the 2020 Annual Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- That the 2020 Fourth Quarter Website Analytics

summary be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information as presented.

- That the 2020 Website Visitors Activity Report be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- That a revision be made to the committee's Composition, Scope and Procedure, as follows:

The A.A. World Services, Inc. Technology/Communication/Services (TCS) Committee is composed of not less than five voting members.

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- That the Regional Forums video be posted to aa.org and YouTube.

Internal Audit

The board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the Internal Audit Committee:

- That the status report on responses to recommendations from the 2018/2019 External Audits, as reviewed and amended by the committee be submitted to the A.A.W.S. Board.

Additional Activities

A.A.W.S. Ad Hoc Committee on Pricing, Discounts and Distribution (Delta committee):

The board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the committee:

- That A.A.W.S., Inc. conduct a three to six-month implementation of an updated shipping charge schedule as a special pilot project by April 1, 2021 with communication to include the rationale as to how it is beneficial.