

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

March 6, 2020

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, March 6, 2020, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, NY, NY 10115. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Cathy B., 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 – Implementation continues with NetSuite and the new vendor RMS. Contract management software is being integrated to facilitate review and analysis of major A.A.W.S. contracts across all departments. Asbestos abatement was completed on the 8th floor and construction will restart with a projected move in date toward the end of May.

Administrative Services – The Records department is experiencing a two month lag in the distribution of GSR, DCM, and new group kits. Efforts are underway to backfill orders while also identifying potential process improvements.

Archives – The Archives has responded to over 250 requests since the beginning of January and assisted a number of approved researchers onsite during the month of February.

Human Resources – The annual employee performance review cycle is from January 15–February 26. All managers have been trained/retrained by HR on the importance of performance reviews and on the review process.

Information Technology Services – Negotiations with RSM were concluded and the Rapid Assessment was kicked off on February 10, 2020. Six workshops with the various business departments have been held, giving RSM an end-to-end view of business events across the departments. The Technology Services department also negotiated the final services agreement with Saralux and is orchestrating the transition between the two vendors.

Staff Report

Accessibilities/LIM – The assignment has received 44 submissions from members on “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic” and fifteen shared activities experiences on Cooperation with the Elder Community. Story submissions will be evaluated by the subcommittee on “A.A. for the Older Alcoholic.”

Conference – Conference Background in English was posted before the deadline of February 15. The amount of Conference background totaled more than 1,000 pages. Due to this increased volume over last year, which was approximately 650 pages, and the tight deadline turnaround to translate the background into French and Spanish by the first week in March,

additional resources were hired. The Conference Coordinator will partner with the Publishing department to provide a full reporting of the translation project experience since its inception in 2018 to the trustees’ Committee on General Service Conference.

C.P.C./Treatment – National exhibits at professional conferences have begun for 2020, with local C.P.C. Committees staffing booths at these conferences.

Corrections – The Corrections Correspondence Service continues to link the alcoholics on the inside with the alcoholics on the outside. Currently there are only 38 alcoholics on the inside waiting to be linked.

Group Services – The Group Services coordinator met with members of the Polish-speaking Intergroup in New Jersey to discuss how that Intergroup can be a resource for Polish-speaking members in nearby states, helping them get involved with general service in their areas.

International – The Trip Consultation Team met in early February to review international trip invitations. Trustee-at-large U.S. Newton P. and Eva S. recently attended Portugal’s 21st Annual Service Forum and visited G.S.O. in Lisbon. In March Newton will be attending Cuba’s 21st General Service Conference, and prior to our GSC in April, trustee-at-large Canada Trish L. will be attending Guatemala’s 50th GSC and the 39th Central America Convention in Nicaragua. Newton will also attend Brazil’s 20th National Convention in mid-April. Planning for the 26th World Service Meeting (WSM) continues.

International Convention – By mid-February registration approached 30,000 people for the Convention. Registration continues to be over 93% online. The upcoming Spring issue of *Box 4-5-9* will include 2020 International Convention updates and news. Information continues to be available on G.S.O.’s A.A. website and is updated as we move forward.

Literature – The draft update of the video “Your General Service Office, Grapevine Office and the General Service Structure” was forwarded to the Conference Literature Committee by the trustees’ Literature Committee. Initial cost estimates for the project, which included this video as well as the introduction to Regional Forums video, were between \$150,000 and \$200,000. Final drafts of both videos have been

produced for \$185,000.

Nominating – All of the candidates for regional trustee have been sent the G.S.B. Conflict of Interest statement to sign and return by April 1.

Public Information – The “Annual Memo to Delegates on Anonymity Break Procedures” was sent in February. An RFP has been sent to media relations firms in the Detroit area to serve as media liaison between the P.I. coordinator and the press for the week of the 2020 International Convention.

Regional Forums – Preparations are underway for the 2020 Regional Forums.

Finance

For the one month ended January 31, 2020 revenues were 5.90% lower than budgeted and 5.26% lower than last year. Operating expenses were .64% lower than budgeted and 3.03% more than last year.

Actual contributions for the one month ended January 31, 2020 were \$733,903, 6.03% lower than budget and 5.45% lower than the one month ended January 31, 2019. On-line contributions for the one month of 2020 amounted to \$123,423. This compared with 88,038 in 2019, \$63,277 in 2018, \$49,587 in 2017 and \$32,992 in 2016. The one-month of 2020 on-line contributions accounts for 16.82% of our total contributions.

The following variances from the 2020 budget were noted for the period of January 1, 2020 to January 31, 2020:

For the one month, the Salary line was \$8,318 (1.17%) more than budget and \$59,065 (8.93%) more than the one month ended January 31, 2019.

Professional fees are \$2,355 lower than budget and \$13,274 lower than 2019. This variance is due to reducing contract reviews.

Travel, Meals and Accommodations are \$6,792 lower than budget and \$23,099 lower than 2019. The January Board weekend fell into the first weekend of February; therefore, most board expenses will be reflected then.

Contracted Services are 67.20% higher than budgeted and 32.65% higher than 2019.

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

- That the AA Grapevine self-support flyer be included in the G.S.O. self-support packet.

Publishing

Gross sales: January gross sales are below budget with actual gross sales at \$1,384,510, which is \$40,490 or a 2.84% negative variance against budget of \$1,425,000.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for January stand at \$945,890, which accounts for about 69.33% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for January are \$620,703 and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$325,186.

Digital books: Total ebook gross sales through January 2020

stand at \$20,201, with 5,226 units distributed.

Big Book translation projects moving forward: Italy, Lesotho, Peru, Philippines, Central America (Miskito).

Our Great Responsibility: Requests to print locally in Argentina and El Salvador; requests for translation in Farsi (Iran) and Polish (Poland).

2020 Catalog of A.A. Conference-approved literature and other A.A. material: The new catalog, with “price normalization” is scheduled for publication April 15, 2020.

Audiobooks Update: Six pamphlets – “Access to A.A.” “This Is A.A.” “Is A.A. for Me?” “Is A.A. for You?” “The A.A. Group” and “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship” – to be recorded in English, French and Spanish.

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

- That the unit prices in English, French and Spanish for the following staple-free pamphlets be approved: “This is A.A.” \$.20, “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” \$.25, “Young People and A.A.” \$.30, “Is A.A. for Me? \$.20, “A Brief Guide to A.A.” \$.25, “A.A. for the Alcoholic with Mental Health Issues – and their sponsors” \$.40.

- That production of the book *Daily Reflections* in Audio format in English, French and Spanish be approved at a cost not to exceed \$25, 240.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The committee reviewed the minutes of G.S.O.’s Website Committee, along with its Composition, Scope and Procedures.

Verbal reports were provided by the director of Technology Services, the Group Services assignment and the Communication Services department.

Two items were approved for inclusion on aa.org: information on the importance of prerelease/Bridging the Gap and the addition of all Young People’s videos for download on the PI committee page.

Progress reports from the Website Design and App Working Group and Google-for-Nonprofits projects were provided, covering a draft plan to continue exploring meeting listings on aa.org, next steps and guidelines for the Meeting Guide app, the posting of A.A.W.S. videos on YouTube and the implementation of a Google Ads account. A progress report was also provided for the ongoing implementation of the LinkedIn page for professionals. The committee discussed the importance of continued and consistent communication with the Intergroups and Central Offices as the Meeting Guide app project continues.

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

- That the service material “The Role of Prerelease and Bridging the Gap” be added to aa.org.
- That all current Young People videos be added to the downloads page on aa.org.

Internal Audit

Directors RACI Matrix: The committee discussed the section of the Director’s RACI Matrix that clarifies communication

between the IAC and the independent auditors who conduct the annual A.A.W.S. audit and will want to discuss addressing future scheduling for review of all RACI Matrices.

Emergency Response/Business Continuity Plan: a proposal for the plan has been received and will be reviewed by management, with a subsequent report to the IAC about further progress.

Vendor Management: All of the contracts from 2016 to 2019 have been entered into the Concord contract management system. With attorney involvement, training for all employees who interact with the new system will be conducted.

It was noted that in executive session the committee reviewed the A.A.W.S., Inc. Personnel Policies Handbook with particular focus on the whistleblower policy.

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

- That the Director's RACI Matrix, as reviewed and amended by the committee, along with the exception report of the RACI Matrix, be accepted.

- That the revised Internal Audit Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure be approved.

Nominating

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

- That Deborah K. be put forward to the trustees' Nominating Committee as the A.A.W.S. board's nominee for the position of General Service Trustee.

Additional Activities

A.A.W.S. Ad Hoc Committee on Pricing, Discounts and Distribution (Delta committee): The committee will continue data analysis in collaboration with G.S.O., with additional reporting to follow.

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

- That the current handling fee be eliminated on all orders.