

Northern Illinois Area 20 Fall Assembly Minutes September 16, 2023, In Person and Online/Video

MINUTES DISCLAIMER: THE MINUTES ARE CONSIDERED CONFIDENTIAL PUBLICATIONS AND SHOULD BE USED FOR AA PURPOSES ONLY

Meeting Opening: The Northern Illinois Area 20 Chair called the meeting to order at 9am. The group participated in a quiet time followed by the Serenity Prayer. Rob welcomed attendees and made the meeting announcements.

Total Attendees: 9 Area Officers, 20 DCMs & Alternates, 11 Area Service Committee Chairs & Alternates, 8 Past Delegates, 55 GSRs and Alternates, 6 District Trusted Servants and 9 Members. 85 in person, 33 zoom =118 total. **91 voting**, 27 non-voting.

First Time Attendees: Victor GSR D11, Julie GSR Early Risers D10, Bryan Tech Committee, Tim GSR D23, Bobby F GSR 4th Dimension Group D11, Dean G GSR D10, Joanne L GSR D10, Madeline GSR D43.

Anniversaries Since Last Assembly: Lori F DCM D10 33 years, Kathy S GSR Brownbaggers D43 5 years, Denny S, 3 Legacies D70 33 years, Suzanne Alt GSR Brownbaggers 6 years, Becky GSR Women's 12X12 D21 2 years, Gina M GSR Thursday Night Discussion Group D43 13 years, Laura Alt Chair Corrections D41 19 years, Kim Alt Registrar 13 years, Dawn B Alt. Chair 20 years, Jeff Alt DCM D70 7 years, Sarah GSR Sunday Morning No Name Group 10 years, Brian 5 years, Chris GSR Remanent Group D11 2 years, Julie GSR Early Risers 8 years, Victor D79 21 years, Bobby F 4 years, Isidro P 4 years, Marcia S Past Delegate 36 years, Jim T BTG Chair 35 years, Joe B 10 years.

The Area Chair reviewed voter eligibility for today's elections and motions. Third Legacy Procedure (substantial unanimity) and written ballots will be used for officer elections. The procedure was reviewed.

Approval of 2023 Fall Assembly Meeting Minutes: Cheryl motioned; Kevin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Officer Reports

Delegates Report: Chris D.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/Delegates-Report-2023-Fall-Assembly.pdf>

Treasurer's Report – Allen J.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/Treasurers-Report-Profit-Loss-Bal-Sheet-16-Sep-2023.pdf>

Alternate Delegates Report – Erik L.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/Alt.-Delgate-Report-Fall-Assembly-9-16-23.pdf>

Alternate Treasurer – Jeff L.

https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/Alt-Treasures_09152023.pdf

Area Chair – Rob M.

https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/15_Fall-Assembly-Chair-Report-2023.pdf

Alternate Area Chair – Dawn B.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/Alternate-Chair-Report-Fall-Assembly-2023.pdf>

Registrar – Chris E.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/06-2023-Fall-Assembly-Registrar-Report.pdf>

Officer Reports Continued:

Alternate Registrar – Kim D.

Here's what I have been up to since the Summer Assembly: Meet with the Registrar twice to go over reports and motions. Input new GSRs from the last assembly into Fellowship Connection. Prepared forms for the Fall 2023 Assembly. 2023 Expenses to date: \$112.53. Expenses since the last report: \$27.38

Secretary – Sue M.

<https://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/secretary-report-fall-assembly-2023-.pdf>

Area Elections – Panel 74

91 Total Voting Members

Immediate Past Delegate Marilyn F facilitated the election per the Area Service Manual guidelines. Instructions were given for the elections. Each person will qualify themselves by giving their service background. The candidate must be elected by a 2/3 (67%) majority of the electorate. The voting for Area officers was by paper ballots unless the position was unopposed. The Assembly voted by a show-of-hands if the officer position only had one candidate. The Assembly voted to elect Area standing committee chairs and alternate chairs by show-of-hand voting, simple majority. The zoom polling feature was used for online voting members.

OFFICERS

Delegate – Erik L stood for the position. A nomination was declined by Lisa S. Kevin A. nominated and he accepted.

Results: Erik 76 votes 84%, Kevin 15 votes 16%. Erik was elected.

Alternate Delegate – Rob M and Lisa S stood for the position.

Results: Lisa 64 votes 69%, Rob 29 votes 31%. Lisa was elected.

Chair - Dawn stood for the position. A show-of-hands was used for this vote. Dawn was elected.

Alternate Area Chair – Aaron V stood for the position. Allen J was nominated. Allen clarified that he is still eligible for the position. He did not complete a full rotation when in the position prior.

Results: **FIRST VOTE:** Aaron 60 votes 65% Allen 32 votes 35% **SECOND VOTE:** Aaron 68 votes 75% Allen 23 votes 25%. Aaron was elected.

Secretary – Sue M stood for the position. Sue was elected by a show of hands.

Alternate Secretary – Susan H. was nominated but respectfully declined. Rachel M stood for the position. A show-of-hands was used for this vote. Rachel was elected.

Treasurer – Mike H and Dave F stood for the position. Rob M and Jeff L were nominated but declined.

Results: **First Vote:** Dave 52 votes 57%, Mike 39 votes 43%. Before the **second vote**, Mike withdrew as candidate for treasurer. Dave was elected.

Alternate Treasurer – Mike H stood for the position and was elected by a show-of-hands.

Registrar – Rob M. stood for the position. Kim D declined the nomination. Rob was elected by a show-of-hands.

Alternate Registrar – Kim D stood for the position. She is eligible to run for this position as she has not done a full rotation yet. By a show-of-hands Kim was elected.

Elections Continued:

AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Accessibilities – Chris E. stood for the position and was elected after a simple majority vote.

Alternate Accessibilities – No one stood for the position or was nominated. The position remains open.

Answering Service – Dave T stood for the position and was elected.

Alternate Answering Service - No one stood for the position or was nominated. The position remains open.

Archives and Alternate Archives - No one stood for these positions or was nominated. The positions remain open.

Bridging the Gap – Jim T stood for the position. He is eligible to run since he has only currently been in the position for 6 months. Jim was elected.

Alternate Bridging the Gap – Joe B stood for the position and was elected.

Corrections – George P stood for the position and was elected.

Alternate Corrections – Rich H was nominated. He was not present to accept the nomination. No one stood for the position. The position remains open.

CPC – Jan S stood for the position. Jan is still eligible for this position as she has not yet served a full rotation. She was elected after a simple majority vote.

Alternate CPC – Karen D was nominated but respectfully declined. The position remains open.

Grapevine – Raul S was nominated. With the help of the interpreter, Raul accepted the nomination and qualified himself in Spanish. Terry M. stood for the position.

Results: Raul 75 votes 75%, Terry 16 votes 25%. Raul was elected.

Alternate Grapevine – Terry M. stood for the position. He was elected.

Literature and Alternate Literature - There were no nominations or candidates to stand. These positions remain open.

Public Information and Alternate Public Information – Ed M was nominated for chair but respectfully declined. There were no nominations or candidates to stand. These positions remain open.

Treatment – Kevin A and Jeff L stood for the position.

Results: Kevin 34 votes 62%, Jeff 21 votes 38%. Kevin was elected.

Alternate Treatment – Jeff L stood for the position. After a simple majority vote, Jeff was elected.

FLOOR MOTIONS

- A floor motion was made to remove the breakout sessions from the agenda. The person making the motion and the second were not identified. The Assembly voted to remove the breakout sessions from the agenda. No minority opinion was given.

- A floor motion was made by Cheryl V to only hear Conference reports today. All other reports should be written and submitted. A second was made by Sarah B.

After discussion a simple majority vote, the floor motion passed. No minority opinion.

Conference Reports

2023 Big Book Conference – Rich N.

The Big Book Conference is November 4th. \$15 registration for lunch. 5 breakout sessions and 2 speakers. We are looking forward to a great conference. I brought a lot of flyers today that were distributed. The website is currently not working. There is a problem with a payment option but will have it corrected in a day or two.

2024 Spring Assembly & Conference – Sarah & Raul

On the table are save the date flyer. Registration flyers are on the way. The 3 speakers are selected. Program chairs are filling the panels. Registration cost is \$40, and the banquet cost is \$50. Hotels can be booked now. We are looking for groups/people to host the hospitality room. The treasurer and webmaster are working together to accept credit card payments for registration and banquet. The website is active. All chair positions except banquet have at least one chair. Because there are three districts hosting, we have someone from each district in these positions.

2024 Big Book Conference Bid – Jeff, Alt. DCM D70

At the August district meeting we voted unanimously to host the 2024 Big Book Conference at Lord of Life Church. We have a conference advisory committee made up of myself, the DCM and 2 GSRs. The function of the committee will be to help facilitate conference committee chairs and alternates. The first planning meeting will be on September 23rd. The second meeting will be in October and the third meeting will be in November when elections for all the positions will be held.

The vote: a simple majority voted to accept the bid.

Old Business

Open positions elections – (serve through Dec 2023)

- a. Secretary Alternate
- b. Accessibilities Comm Area Chair & Alternate
- c. Answering Service Comm Alternate
- d. Archives Comm Area Chair & Alternate
- e. CPC Comm Alternate
- f. BTG Comm Area Alternate
- g. Grapevine Area Chair & Alternate
- h. Literature Alternate
- i. Treatment Area Chair & Alternate

Kevin A, stood for Treatment Area Chair. The candidate did not qualify for the position because he is currently a GSR.

New Business

Motion to amend the NIA Ltd. Bylaws to include the Area Registrar as an officer of the Corporation and to update the list of voting members

Motion

The Area Registrar moves to amend the By-laws of Northern Illinois Area, Ltd. (*N.I.A., Ltd.*) to include the Area Registrar as an officer of the Corporation in Article III, to update the list of voting members in Article V, and to fix typos throughout, as shown below; and to assign responsibility for this document in the Northern Illinois Service Manual.

Motion Continued:

Changes to be made to the By-laws of Northern Illinois Area, Ltd:

1. In Article III, first paragraph, add Registrar to the list of officers.
2. In Article III, after paragraph six, add, "In the event the Registrar shall resign or be removed from office, the Alternate Registrar shall assume the office of Registrar immediately upon the effective date of such resignation or removal."
3. In Article III, paragraph eight, change, "The ~~five~~ ~~four~~ elected officers shall constitute an Executive Committee..."
4. In Article V, remove the list of persons entitled to vote, and replace with the following:
 - (a) All persons listed as voting members of the Area Assembly in the "Northern Illinois Service Manual."
5. In the header of the document, change *BY-LAWS* to *BYLAWS*.
6. In Article III, first paragraph, correct the typos *Ares* to *Area*, and *Nothern* to *Northern*.
7. In Article III, second paragraph, correct the typo *offide* to *office*.

Changes to be made to the Northern Illinois Service Manual:

1. In the Responsibilities section of the N.I.A. Service Manual Custodian (p46), modify the following bullet points:
 - Format and maintain the documents that together make up the N.I.A. Service Manual, ~~along with~~ Northern Illinois Planning Procedures, and the Bylaws of Northern Illinois Area, Ltd.
 - Coordinate the translation into Spanish of the documents that together make up the N.I.A. Service Manual, ~~along with~~ Northern Illinois Planning Procedures, and the Bylaws of Northern Illinois Area, Ltd. by third party vendor if necessary.
2. In the list of documents that the Report and Charter Committee is responsible for (p48), add: ○ Bylaws of Northern Illinois Area, Ltd.

**all page numbers reference the "NIA 20 Service Manual, web version 09/2022."*

Background

According to Sarah E. Merkle, JD, CPP-T, PRP, bylaws are the go-to source for how an organization operates. Bylaws exist to give an organization structure. They define the organization's primary characteristics, how it functions, and the rights and duties of members. They trump the parliamentary authority (Robert's Rules) and any other rules that you've adopted (like our Northern Illinois Service Manual). But bylaws aren't always in charge. The law, your charter, and any other formation documents (Articles of Incorporation) supersede the bylaws.

It has been said by some members of the Area Assembly that *N.I.A., Ltd.* is a separate legal entity and that its bylaws do not govern the Area Assembly, and therefore, that the bylaws do not need to be updated just because the Area Assembly passed some motions.

However, the bylaws of *N.I.A., Ltd.* lay out the framework of "The Quarterly Assemblies" in Article IV and specify who can vote on "any issues brought to a vote at such meetings" (referring to the Quarterly Assemblies). The bylaws clearly govern what happens at Assemblies.

Motion Continued:

Article V explains who can vote, "The following persons shall be entitled to vote at elections and on issues requiring membership approval," and then lists those people, as they existed in 1991 when the bylaws were approved. **That list does not include the Registrar, Alternate Secretary, Alternate Treasurer, or Alternate Registrar.**

The Registrar position was created, made an officer, and became a voting member of the Assembly at the Summer Assembly in 2005. The Alternate Treasurer and Alternate Secretary became voting members of the Assembly at the Fall Assembly in 2006. The Alternate Registrar became a voting member of the Assembly at the Fall Assembly in 2022.

Motion Continued:

Because bylaws supersede any other rules adopted by an organization (like the Northern Illinois Service Manual), these changes have never truly taken effect. It is time to update the bylaws to include these changes that the Assembly already made, and we might as well fix some typos, too.

Article VI says, “These By-Laws may be amended from time to time by vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the eligible voters in attendance at any assembly...” Ownership of the bylaws, and the right to change them, belongs to the Area Assembly, not the officers of *N.I.A., Ltd.*

So that a motion like this will not be needed again if there is a change to the voting members of the Assembly, I propose replacing the list of voting members in Article V with the following:

(a) All persons listed as voting members of the Area Assembly in the “Northern Illinois Service Manual.”

I also propose that responsibility for the Bylaws document be formalized in the Northern Illinois Service Manual by assigning duties to trusted servants that already have responsibility for other governing documents: the N.I.A. Service Manual Custodian & Report and Charter Committee.

References

- <http://aa-nia.org/wp-content/uploads/NIA-20-Service-Manual-web-202209.pdf>
- “NIA Ltd. Bylaws (anon protected).pdf” – attached to this motion **Follow Up Action Required**
- Make the changes outlined in the motion to the two documents.
- Reporting the changes to the Bylaws may be required the next time we file IRS Form 990.

Chris E

N.I.A. 20 Registrar registrar@aa-nia.org

After questions and comments the assembly voted.

Vote Results: Substantial Unanimity 61 for 7 against. Motion passes. There was no minority opinion.

Motion to provide for translation of all Area documents and to provide a language interpreter at all Area functions

Motion

The Area Registrar, along with the D.C.M.s for the Spanish linguistic Districts, moves to amend the Northern Illinois Service Manual in the following ways, to provide for translation of all documents in N.I.A. and to provide a language interpreter at all Area functions:

**all page numbers reference the “NIA 20 Service Manual, web version 09/2022.”*

1. The following paragraphs shall be added to Northern Illinois Service Manual at the end of the *Introduction* paragraph of SERVICE GUIDELINES, before *The Area Assembly* on p. 17 :

All agendas, motions, minutes, presentations, reports, and other documents produced at the Area level in N.I.A. are to be translated into any language requested by the fellowship. All documents shall be made available concurrently and in the same format as English documents; whether printed and provided at an Area function, emailed to the Area or its various committees, posted on the website, or made available in other ways. Area trusted servants are strongly encouraged to use web-based translation or another translation method to translate their reports and email communications into other languages before sending them out. Translation of major documents shall be done by a third party vendor. All such documents should be written and provided to the Area Chairperson, or their designate, with sufficient time to translate and distribute the documents before Area functions. The timeframe shall be determined by the Area Chairperson with the third party vendor.

Motion Continued:

Language interpreters and sufficient equipment for live translation shall be provided at all Area functions, such as Assemblies, Committee Meetings, conferences, and the Pre-General Service Conference Workshop.

2. The following bullet point in the responsibilities of *All Officers* on page 30 , “Reporting Officers or their Alternates must submit a written report at Assemblies and Committee meetings,” shall be replaced with this new bullet point:

Submit a written report at Assemblies and Committee Meetings. Reports should be written with enough time to be translated into other languages according to the SERVICE GUIDELINES section of this document.

3. That same new bullet point from change #2 shall be added to the list of responsibilities of *Alternate Officers* on page 30.
4. At the end of the bullet point in the *Responsibilities* of Service Committee Chairs on page 40, “Report on Area Service Committee activities at Area Committee Meetings. Committee Chairs or their Alternates must submit a written report at Assemblies and committee meetings,” add the following sentence:

Reports should be written with enough time to be translated into other languages according to the SERVICE GUIDELINES section of this document.

5. That same new bullet point from change #2 shall be added to the list of *Responsibilities* of Appointees on page 45.
6. That same new bullet point from change #2 shall be added to the end of the paragraph beginning the section of *Responsibilities of Administrative Committees* before the *Operating Committee Responsibilities* on page 46.
7. The bullet point “Report on recent activities at Area Committee Meetings. Submit a written report at Assemblies and,” which is erroneously placed at the bottom of page 44 in the list of appointed positions, shall be removed.
8. The following bullet point in the *Responsibilities* of Area Alternate Chairperson on page 32, “Assist in obtaining Spanish interpreter for Assemblies and Pre-General Conference Service Workshop,” shall be replaced with this new bullet point:

Assist in obtaining language interpreters, and additional equipment when needed, for all Area functions, such as Assemblies, Committee Meetings, conferences, and the PreGeneral Service Conference Workshop.

Background

The current practices of N.I.A. fall short of adequately addressing the language barrier to full participation in the Area. How can Spanish speaking trusted servants participate in discussion and vote on motions if they don’t have the materials available in Spanish?

We do not provide a Spanish interpreter at Area Committee Meetings. These are the meetings where motions that will go before the Assembly are explained, questions can be asked, and information can be gathered to take back to the districts to share with the G.S.R.s, so that they can in turn take it to their groups to get an informed group decision. The D.C.M.s from the Spanish linguistic Districts have been attending Area Committee Meetings without an interpreter present to translate. The motions and background materials are only available in English. Reports from officers and committee chairs are not translated. The Northern Illinois Service Manual has not been printed in Spanish since 2020.

Steps have been taken in the right direction by some officers voluntarily, translating their reports and emails. Spanish agendas for Assemblies and Area Committee Meetings have been produced, but only available in print at the meetings. Because translation is not being done by all Area trusted servants, voluntarily or completely, it needs to be required now.

Floor Motion

I, Chris E, move to provide a language interpreter at the 2023 Fall Committee Meeting.

This motion was seconded by Lorrie F.

Discussion: Can we add 2023 to the motion? Yes. A point of order was made that we should be voting whether to discuss the motion before actually voting on the motion. The Chairperson moved forward to the vote.

Vote results: There was no headcount. It passed 100%.

MOTION to amend the NIA Service Manual to include Green Can duties to the Treatment Chair responsibilities

Motion:

The NIA Area Chair moves to add the following verbiage to the NIA Service Manual section outlining the duties of the Treatment Chair.

Add the following:

Facilitate the collection of green can contributions.

- Green can funds are to be used only for literature for Treatment.
- Green can contributions are collected by groups. Green can funds may be used directly by groups or districts to purchase literature for Treatment.
- Excess contributions should be forwarded to the N.I.A. Treasurer. Green can funds held by the Area Treasurer are available to Districts by making a request of the Area Treatment Chair.
- Green can funds are available to the Area Treatment chair.

Background:

It came to the chair's attention by the NIA Treasurer that although there is money that has been collected from the NIA groups for green can and has been held for use the treatment chair it has never been added to duties. The money has been collected and used up to this point with no guidelines.

The above verbiage is taken from the Corrections Chair guidelines and is suggested that the green can be handled in the same way.

Questions: A request was made for the Chair to step aside to facilitate this portion of the meeting because the Chair is presenting this motion. The Alternate Chair, Dawn, presided over this portion of the meeting. After a lengthy discussion the assembly voted.

Vote results: a simple majority vote was taken. 50 yes, 13 no. The motion passed. No minority opinion.

Finance Report – Bonnie P.

The Finance committee recommended sending \$10,000 to the GSB. A floor motion was made to table the recommendation until after the ECRF. There was a second to the floor motion, the assembly voted by simple majority against tabling the motion 54 no, 15 yes. After the discussion, a substantial unanimity vote was taken. 58 voted to send the money, 10 voted against. Motion passed.

Service and Administrative Committee Reports

Answering Service – Dan M. Correct Answering Service Number - For all Districts. Listed Cities in Each District (All Districts#) - Correct Number to call for info by city. QR Code Utilized - Once Opened - Will Provide: you access to the information. Stickers with the QR Code - Will be utilized in our area by any or all committees that wish to use them for information purposes: Answering Service - Bridging the Gap - Treatment Centers - Public Information - Corrections - To Connect with Area 20. QR Code is the gateway

Committee Reports Continued:

to Area 20 up to date AA answering service information - for all our Districts and Cities within our Districts. I'm asking IT Contact if we can make this online document searchable as well as a user-friendly tool. I've had conversations with Jim, Bridging the Gap - And by email with the newly elected Corrections Chair. I have an appointment with an IT - AA Member to convey everything I've discussed above and our vision to help those looking for information. The appointment is at 5:30 on Wednesday evening September 27th. I will have additional information to share after the meeting. The newly elected Answering Service Chair will also be attending this meeting.

Archives – Open

BTG – Jim T Since the last Assembly I attended the D-23 Service Workshop on Aug. 27, 2023 where there were 2 people interested in what the future looked like for BTG. I will be explaining the comprehensive new BTG 2.0 Plan for helping people transition from Corrections or Treatment facilities to AA at this Fall Assembly breakout session. If you have any interest in finding out more about BTG efforts moving forward, please plan to attend this breakout session. Preview: This plan includes new and innovative ways to provide an efficient, and positive outcome for the people BTG is supposed to serve. It includes new materials, new processes, and new ways for our Service Committees to cooperate with each other towards fulfilling our Primary Purpose. There will be new avenues of coordination with individual AA groups, Districts, and the Area. New website utilization, quicker response to newcomer's calls, and opportunities for important continuing education for all AA volunteers.

CPC – Jan S. CPC has been a busy year. The committee has visited with many high school students, as well as nursing students and school health fairs in the Area. Moving forward, as the Chair, I will be sending out to all DCM's CPC monthly activities with detailed information that can be offered to volunteers. As it's been a challenge to recruit CPC District Chairs, possibly opening this up to all District members, we can produce additional results. Currently the Committee has 2 high school visits and a health fair for the fall. Also contacted was the Rotary Club of Hinsdale and will see if this pans out. They did show interest and could be used in all Districts. More to follow. During the last 2 quarters, I was able to attend the Illinois State Conference hosted by Area 19, the "We are Not Saints Convention" also hosted by Area 19. I will be attending the Big Book Conference in October as well as the East Central Forum in November.

Corrections – George Alt. Chair We held an online committee meeting with 13 attendees. We will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the month. Hopefully, we will soon be able to interact with the inmates in the meetings. DCMs and GSRs please include the pink cans when passing the baskets. We have sent a huge shipment of literature to Statesville including Spanish literature.

Archivist – Cheryl V. Nothing to report

Service Manual Custodian – Cheryl V. Updates from Summer Assembly have been integrated to the Service Manual. Latest version of English and Spanish have been posted to the web.

Concepts Editor – Susan H. The Fall Concepts edition was emailed on September 15th.

No other reports were submitted.

After open Mic, a motion to adjourn was made by Aaron and second by Lorrie. The meeting ended with the Responsibility Statement.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue M.

NIA 20 Alternate Secretary

Next Meeting is October 7th, 2023, at Lord of Life Church