

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

September 15, 2017

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, September 15, 2017, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, 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. was on medical leave but provided the following report:

Administration – A new policy for dealing with inquiries related to Spanish and French translations has been implemented and all such inquiries should be routed directly to the general manager's office.

Administrative Services – The three confidential Regional Directories have been published and are in the warehouses; the international Intergroup/Central Office Directory was sent to Publishing to resolve formatting issues; work on the International Directory is beginning. Group Services, Records and IT services worked together to create a District and Intergroup positions sweep of the FNV database that will allow the Records department to clean up the information in the database and decrease the amount of returned mail.

Archives – The Archives renovation had to be rescheduled due to a delay in the furniture delivery. The renovation dates are now September 20 through October 5, 2017. Archives staff has developed a new digital exhibit on Sam Shoemaker, which will soon be added to the "Archives and History" portal of aa.org. One new and exciting discovery made by our senior archivist was a letter from 1976 providing significant details about an unknown 1942 film in our collection in which Bill and Dr. Bob appear together. Other figures in the film include founding members of the King School Group (Group No. 1) and Anne S., Dr. Bob's wife.

Human Resources – A number of positions have been filled in the IT, Finance and Support Services departments. The proposal for lump-sum offerings for terminated vested employees has been submitted by the actuary, approved by the Retirement Committee, A.A.W.S, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., and the first communication has been sent out. An extensive audit of our Defined Benefit Pension Plan has been successfully completed and we received an IRS Determination Letter on the continuing qualification of the plan.

Information Technology – The director of IT Services has conducted a thorough review of references and a contract will be signed shortly for a vendor to consult and advise regarding a new ERP system. Regarding the full website design, three companies have been selected to submit final presentations. AA Grapevine has been a full participant and partner in the discussions, review of vendors and subsequent planning.

Consideration of an A.A.W.S. app has also been included in this process.

August – September Travel:

August 18-20, 2017: Met with Eastern Canada Regional Trustee, Montreal, Quebec.

August 23-25, 2017: Visit to Intergroup and District Offices, historic sites, Akron and Cleveland, Ohio.

September 8-10: Attended West Central Regional Forum, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Staff Report

Conference – Work continues in preparation for the 68th General Service Conference. To date, 11 proposed agenda items have been received.

C.P.C. – Recent exhibitions include the American Correctional Association's Conference in St. Louis. Class A Trustee Nancy McCarthy was at the booth, answering questions about A.A. and making important connections with corrections professionals for G.S.O. to follow up on.

Group Services / Loners-Internationalists Meeting (LIM) – Preparations are currently underway for our participation at the 32nd Annual Central Office/Intergroup/A.A.W.S./AAGV Seminar that will be held in Northern Virginia. The theme for the seminar is "Frontlines of A.A.: Keeping the Lifeline Alive."

International – The desk has been busy with preparations for the Meeting of the Americas (REDELA) in San Jose, Costa Rica, October 1-5, and the European Service Meeting (E.S.M.) October 13-15, in York, England, as well as coordinating upcoming trips to Peru, Costa Rica and Bolivia.

Literature – The trustees' Literature Committee is currently accepting resumes for a nontrustee Appointed Committee Member (ACM) position. The deadline for receipt of applications is November 30, 2017. The fall issue of *Box 4-5-9* will feature an article on Central Offices/Intergroups: Then and Now.

Nominating – Announcements regarding upcoming vacancies for regional trustees and nontrustee directors have been distributed.

Public Information – An addition was made to the Public Information Committee page on aa.org to allow local P.I. Committees to link broadcasters to a page where all current

video P.S.A.s can be downloaded in HD Broadcast quality, on demand and without a cost to the broadcaster or the local committee.

Regional Forums – The first of two Local Forums in 2017 was held July 21-23 in Area 72 Western Washington with 148 attendees, highlighting an exciting new level of integration of service efforts among English and Spanish speaking A.A. members. A committee has formed and started discussions for holding a similar event next year. The final Local Forum of 2017 is scheduled for September 22-24 in Area 75 Southern Wisconsin.

Treatment and Accessibilities – A request for shared experience regarding the expressed need for a pamphlet for A.A. members who are Deaf has been distributed to the Fellowship. We are receiving shared experience from local committees and A.A. members working to carry the A.A. message to veterans and active duty members of the Armed Services.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The TCS Committee reviewed progress reports and updates on G.S.O.'s A.A. website software and analytics and heard reports from the director of IT and the Group Services assignment. The director of administration and staff services provided a brief progress update on the website design project and shared that the YouTube account has been set up and the YouTube page for A.A.W.S. is currently under design.

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

- That all A.A. Grapevine items in kit lists on G.S.O.'s A.A. website be linked to a designated page on aagrapevine.org.

Publishing

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

Gross sales: August gross sales are over budget with actual gross sales at \$1,150,528, which is an \$83,177 (7.79%) positive variance against budget of \$1,067,351. For 2017 through the month of August, gross sales are above estimate: \$9,623,068 actual sales vs. estimate of \$9,224,953, which is a \$398,115 (5.03%) positive variance.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for August 2017 stand at \$730,595, which accounts for about 63.5% of total sales for the company. Total online orders for August stand at 1,580, which is 70% of total orders. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for August are \$522,050, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$208,545.

Digital books: Total e-book gross sales for January-July 2017 stand at \$127,713, with 32,854 units distributed.

Translation reviews: Denmark is moving forward on a re-translation of the Big Book. The Dominican Republic has been issued a license to reproduce and distribute the Big Book in Spanish. The Ecuador Quechua translation of Chapter 5 has received a report, with instructions for improvement. The Navajo Big Book recordings are complete, and master files

have been submitted to Production to start the process. Kazakhstan has requested to translate the Big Book; Lesotho has been in contact regarding an ongoing translation effort for the Big Book; and Ukraine's re-translation of the Big Book received a favorable report and a license to reproduce and distribute will be issued.

Large print pricing: The committee discussed the pricing put forward by the Publishing Department for the three revised large print pamphlets and requested that the pricing be revised and brought back to the next meeting for review.

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

- That the 75th Commemorative facsimile of the First Edition Big Book, *Pass It On, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, and *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* be bundled as a special holiday gift set at the price point of \$30.00 per set. With the exception of the 75th Commemorative facsimile of the First Edition Big Book, the set will be available in the three Conference languages of English, French and Spanish.
- That A.A.W.S. re-record the audio and video of "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" to conform to the revision of the pamphlet that has been retitled "Accessibility for All Alcoholics," in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

Finance

Unaudited financial results: The G.S.O. seven-month unaudited financial report revealed that net sales were \$8,351,726 or \$333,545 (4.16%) more than budget; contributions were \$504,106 more than budget and an improvement from the June 30 over budget condition of \$442,896.

Contributions and sales were up in August and expenses have been mostly on budget as a whole, though variances were noted to the salaries, professional fees and contracted services lines. Overall, a bottom line profit is expected for the year.

Contributions Analytics: A presentation was made by the Finance department regarding contributions.

Self-Support: The committee unanimously approved its purpose statement: "To recommend actions and recommendations to A.A.W.S. that will help the Fellowship achieve self-support from the perspective of contributions vs. services."

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

- That the revised version of the A.A.W.S. Board Finance Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure be accepted.

Additional Topics

A subcommittee was appointed to analyze the effects of price changes on literature.

After discussion, the Board approved the following recommendation to be sent to the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference:

- That time be made at the 2018 General Service Conference for a presentation on the topic: A.A. Principles and Financial Responsibility.