

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

July 26, 2018

The A.A. World Services Board met on Thursday, July 26, 2018, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, NY, NY. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, David N., 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 – Polling of General Service Conference members was undertaken to resolve a discrepancy with the scheduled dates for the 2019 Conference. The polling took place between July 9-22, with 100% participation. [The final dates for the 69th Conference are now confirmed for May 19-25, 2019.]

Site selection for the 2030 International Convention continued with site visits to the two finalist cities by the committee. A site visit to Detroit for the 2020 International Convention will be held in September.

Staff rotation is on schedule to be completed by the end of September; training and preparations on the part of Staff members and Staff assistants is ongoing at this time.

Administrative Services – The Meetings, Events and Travel team is now a part of the Administrative/Support Services group. The team is preparing for a number of events: General Service Board Weekend, upcoming Regional Forums and the World Service Meeting in South Africa.

Human Resources – Employee Recognition Day was conducted on June 4, receiving positive feedback from employees who attended. Grapevine employees participated as well.

June – July Travel:

July 20-22: Eastern Canada Regional Forum, Victoriaville, Quebec.

Staff Report

Communication Services – Subscriptions to the A.A.W.S. YouTube channel have increased to over 1,300 with new subscriptions daily. The new website design continues toward a final site map, along with development of a creative brief and mood boards. Discussion and strategies continue on the development of an app for G.S.O.

Conference – The assignment continues looking into making the dashboard as user-friendly as possible and is working collaboratively with the METS team and the Finance Department to develop new accommodation forms and simplify the travel reimbursement process for delegates.

C.P.C. – Recently, the C.P.C. coordinator staffed a booth at the Urban Ministry Conference, providing literature to clergy members from New York City and Newark and to military

chaplains in attendance.

Corrections – An update on the CCS waiting list was sent to local corrections committees and delegates; the list of inmates waiting for CCS contacts is now down from 149 to 76.

Group Services – Noting the desire to make A.A.'s message more accessible, the *LIM* bulletin is now produced in a larger type size to be more reader friendly.

International – Preparations are in high gear for the 25th World Service Meeting. Currently 69 delegates from 43 countries are expected to attend. Several countries have generously contributed additional funds to provide financial assistance to countries that have asked for help in funding their W.S.M. delegates.

Literature – The May 2018 literature activity update report was distributed, providing information about the 2018 Advisory Actions and Committee Considerations regarding literature, an update on the Big Book translations, and news of the availability of the “Anonymity in the Digital Age” poster.

Nominating – The Nominating desk has notified the A.A.W.S. and Grapevine boards regarding the 2019 vacancies for trustee directors to replace Tom A. and Cate W.

Public Information – The video public service announcement “Changes” will include French and Spanish versions. The young people’s video approved at the 2018 General Service Conference is being added to aa.org.

Regional Forums – The 2018 Western Canada Regional Forum was held in Regina, Saskatchewan, June 6-8 with 235 people in attendance, including 145 first-timers. The Eastern Canada Regional Forum, held in Victoriaville, Quebec, July 20-22, had 284 pre-registrations the week of the forum, including 183 French-speaking members. The Pacific Regional Forum, scheduled for September 7-9 in San Jose, California, has garnered 200 pre-registrants in the first week of open registration.

Treatment and Accessibilities – Two local committees in Minneapolis and Texas were invited to review three chapters of the new ASL translation of the Big Book. Positive and enthusiastic feedback was provided.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The TCS Committee reviewed the minutes of G.S.O.'s Website Committee, along with progress reports and updates on G.S.O.'s A.A. website analytics.

Oral reports were given by the director of I.T. Services and the Group Services assignment. The director of I.T. services noted that work on the International Directory and data map is almost finished; testing of the new ERP system is targeted to begin in October, with finance to be the first component to be rolled out. The Group Services coordinator reported that the office is collecting information identifying additional databases used by staff and staff assistants in support of the ERP process; A.A. Guidelines are being revised as needed.

The committee discussed the A.A.W.S./G.S.O. app to be launched in conjunction with the new A.A. website, which would include the Meeting Guide, Big Book, Daily Reflections and alert/messaging capabilities.

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

- That the 2018 Second Quarter Website Analytics and the 2018 Second Quarter Report on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website Activities be forwarded to the trustees' P.I. Committee.

- That the General Service Office proceed with the implementation of the Meeting Finder component of the A.A.W.S. app, pending General Service Board review.

Publishing

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

Gross sales: June gross sales are slightly below budget with actual gross sales at \$961,621, which is a \$1,056 or .11% negative variance against budget of \$962,677.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for June stand at \$720,058, which accounts for about 76% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for June are \$436,810, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$283,247.

Digital books: Total e-book gross sales through June stand at \$109,536, with 27,998 units distributed.

Design of the book *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W.'s General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1970* is close to completion. French and Spanish translation and indexing has begun, with estimated availability of finished books in all three languages in early 2019.

Current A.A. literature translation projects are underway in Brazil, Bali, Czech Republic, Denmark, Morocco, Poland and Ukraine. Newly pending, with Chapter Five submissions under review, is the first-ever translation of the Big Book into Kazakh (Kazakhstan) and a retranslation of the Bulgarian Big Book. Two independent Big Book translations in two Quechua languages are in progress.

At the request of Intergroup/Central Office managers and staffs, bar codes are being added to the back covers of our items of literature in all three language versions as they come up for reprint.

"Anonymity in the Digital Age" posters: Print files have been updated and the posters will go into manufacturing, with a flyer announcing their availability to be mailed with the Fall edition of *Box 4-5-9*.

Language totals: The Big Book is available in 71 languages, which includes the original English plus 70 translations. Navajo is the latest new language completed. There are 22 non-English languages pending (15 new ones and 7 revisions in progress). *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is currently available in 44 languages; this represents 43 translations plus the original English. Additionally, as the result of an extensive organizing and inventory effort of Native American and First Nations materials on hand in the office and used by the Fellowship, we are able to include languages such as Algonquin, Cree, Inuktitut, Micmac and Mohawk in our tally of totals, bringing the count of A.A. languages worldwide up from 92, as reported in 2017, to a current total of 102.

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

- That the pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues – and their sponsors" be priced at \$0.50 per unit in English, French and Spanish.

Finance

Sales through the first six months of 2018 were below budget, while contributions were ahead of budget. Regarding some of the variances between the 2018 budget and year-to-date results, the following areas were noted:

Revenue: For the six months ended June 30, 2018 revenue was 0.91% higher than budgeted and 2.04% lower than the six months ended June 30, 2017. Operating expenses were 2.66% greater than budgeted and 11.87% more than last year. Unit book and booklet sales have decreased from 2017 by 18,815 pieces or (2.18%).

Contributions: Actual contributions for the six months ended June 30, 2018 were \$3,816,472, which is 3.77% higher than budget and 1.19% higher than the six months ended June 30, 2017. Online contributions for the first six months of 2018 amounted to \$369,067. This compared with \$333,480 in 2017, \$212,908 in 2016, \$179,449 in 2015, and \$135,909 in 2014. Online contributions for the first six months of 2018 account for 9.80% of total contributions.

Expenses: For the six months, salaries were \$77,921 (2.20%) more than budget and \$379,034 (11.70%) more than the six months ended June 30, 2017. Several more positions have been filled in the first six months of 2018 as compared to the same period last year.

Other Program Printing expenses are \$19,126 less than last year, partially caused by the directories being printed in the first six months of last year. Also, there were approximately \$5,000 additional charges incurred in 2017 for the World Service Meeting Final Report that were not incurred this year. Mailing and Labor were down by \$15,214 when compared to last year and postage was down by \$41,474, as the catalog was printed and shipped in the first quarter of last year.

Writers' fees (editorial services) are higher in 2018 by \$83,666 as compared to 2017 due to the ASL project taking place in the beginning of this year. Selling expenses are less than last year by \$136,706 caused mainly by the catalog being printed in the first six months of last year.

Professional fees are \$112,979 higher than budget and

\$142,620 higher than 2017. The \$135,000 settlement for the manuscript case is the reason for the budget variance for the first six months of 2018.

Office Service and Expense is \$72,801 (39.39%) higher than budget and \$108,953 (73.28%) higher than last year. These variances are due mainly to the Conference audiovisual costs being higher this year as opposed to last year.

Travel, Meetings and Accommodations are \$281,805 (60.23%) over last year. This is because the Conference was held in Rye in 2017 and in New York City in 2018.

Additional Activities

The Auditor's Review Report: David Morris, Class A treasurer of the GSB, reviewed for the board the new format for the Consolidated Financial Statements prepared by Marks Paneth for the six months' periods ended June 30, 2018 and 2017. This was the first report from our new auditors and David highlighted some of the differences in the new format.

Review of 2018/2019 A.A.W.S. Board meeting dates: The board reviewed and approved the remaining 2018 board meeting dates, though a discrepancy in the timing of the annual Conference and the preliminary 2019 meeting dates was discovered. Pending full results of a poll undertaken by management of all Conference members to confirm the dates for the 69th Conference, the board will make a final determination in September for its remaining 2019 meeting dates.

Safety Card: The board heard an oral report from a G.S.O. staff member regarding the progress of an in-house ad hoc subcommittee reviewing the safety card in light of feedback from the Fellowship that has been received at the office. Discussion followed regarding the process by which the card was created, the service piece that preceded the card itself (which has been routinely sent out with all card orders), and the responses – both pro and con – that have been expressed regarding the usefulness of the card. The ad-hoc committee will continue with its evaluation and the board will continue its discussion of this matter.

A.A.W.S. Publications Policy: The board reviewed background material regarding the development of the A.A.W.S., Inc. Policy on Publication of Literature that generally describes the standards for determining whether or not a new piece of literature or changes to an existing piece of literature need consideration by the Conference prior to publication. This discussion included recognition of a request from the Publishing Department to the board's Publishing Committee to undertake a review of the policy to more accurately reflect the different nature and editorial needs of pamphlets vs. books and other materials. The request noted the suggestion of an overall language review of A.A.W.S. pamphlets, with additional information to be provided from G.S.O.'s managing editor for the September meeting.

Strategic Planning Committee: The board supported the notion of continuing the work of the Strategic Planning Committee with Deborah A. and Beau B. serving as leads. It was agreed to schedule Strategic Planning meetings for September and March, and suggestions were made for possible topics to be addressed.

DELTA Project: The board discussed an update from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Pricing, Distribution and Discounts (known familiarly as the DELTA Project) that proposed a number of suggestions for consideration by the full board at subsequent meetings. In the interim, it was requested that G.S.O. staff develop an impact analysis relative to the suggestions made by the committee. With fuller information in September, the committee expects to make some recommendations to the full board regarding discounts, shipping/handling charges and order processing procedures.

International Convention Update: Convention consultant Gregg Talley provided a progress report on planning for the 2020 International Convention in Detroit and indicated that the Talley Management Group had made two site visits to Detroit and are planning a third visit in September.

Significant time was also spent working with both Indianapolis and St. Louis in preparation for the 2030 site visits with the A.A.W.S. team.