

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

December 7, 2018

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, December 7, 2018, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, NY, NY 10115. 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 – In early December the internal G.S.O. Leadership Team had another in a series of team-building workshops with an outside facilitator. Additionally, supervisors, department managers, management and G.S.O. Staff met with Impact Collaborative (IC) to review procedures for completion of the communications survey IC has prepared to gather critical information for the development of the 3-year communication plan they are working on for the General Service Board.

Administrative Services – Records staff is preparing to update files to reflect area rotation of service positions for 2019; along with IT, Records staff continues to clean up the Records database in preparation for the migration of information into the new ERP database.

Archives – A new exhibit documenting the history of the writing of the Twelve Steps was created to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Steps (December 1938); a similar exhibit was created to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the creation of the General Service Board (August 1938).

Human Resources – Some temporary employees have been added to assist with support services and the IT help desk. Enrollment in the medical and dental plans has begun for all employees.

Information Technology – Process walkthroughs are complete for most of the modules relative to the ERP and user acceptance training has begun.

November-December Travel:

November 9-11: Middle East Regional Committee of A.A. (MERCAA) Convention, Dubai, UAE.

November 16-18: Southeast Regional Forum, Sterling, VA.

Staff Report

Accessibilities/LIM – Staff is reviewing requested sharing received from the Fellowship regarding Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing technology, ways to lower access barriers for A.A. members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and A.A. activities in underrepresented or remote communities.

Communications Services – Three major projects continue to be the focus of this assignment: website design, You Tube development, and the Meeting Guide app.

Conference – The Conference coordinator and director of IT are collaborating on the reorganization of the Conference dashboard, utilizing feedback received from Conference members.

C.P.C./Treatment – The assignment has recently heard from professionals sharing how effective A.A. has been in their practices, with one neurologist noting that in the past few months he has handed out 60-70 copies of the pamphlet “Do You Think You’re Different?” which he finds has been very effective for some of his patients.

Group Services – Information has recently been prepared for visitors to G.S.O. and others that the office will no longer be selling literature onsite due to a change in the building’s policies restricting sale or pick-up of any materials on building premises. Normal shipping operations will continue and the office is referring people to the Inter-Group Association of A.A. as an alternative for onsite sales.

International – The 25th World Service Meeting took place in Durban, South Africa, October 7-11. The 25th WSM Final Report is underway in print form and once again an anonymity-protected digital version will be posted on aa.org and the WSM dashboard. The 26th WSM will be held in Rye Brook, NY prior to the General Service Board weekend in October 2020, with the theme “The Purpose of Our Service: Sobriety within Everyone’s Reach.”

International Convention – Inquiries about the 2020 International Convention have increased and registration is expected to open toward the latter part of 2019.

Literature – Resumes have been received for an Appointed Committee Member on the trustees’ Literature Committee, with a candidate to be forwarded to the trustees’ Nominating Committee in January 2019.

Nominating – Class A candidate interviews will take place at the upcoming board weekend in January 2019; resumes have been received for Class B regional trustees (Northeast and Southwest) and trustee-at-large/Canada in preparation for elections that will take place at the 2019 General Service Conference.

Public Information – The P.I. desk has been reviewing all Public Information service pieces in order to update language and focus.

Regional Forums – The Southeast Regional Forum took place November 16-18 in Sterling, VA. Regional Forum planning continues for 2020-2021 in close cooperation with G.S.O.'s METS Department. One local forum has been scheduled for 2020.

Finance

For the ten months ended October 31, 2018 gross sales were \$356,688 or 3.02% ahead of budget, Contributions were \$144,715 or 2.24% ahead of budget and total operating expenses were \$327,112 or 2.32% more than budget. Net gain for the ten months was \$287,642 compared with a budgeted gain of \$142,933.

The following variances were noted for the ten months:

The Salary line was \$219,192 (3.70%) more than budget and \$675,536 (12.36%) more than the ten months ended October 31, 2017. Part of the variance to budget is due to several more positions in the first ten months of 2018 compared to the same period last year.

The Other Program Printing expenses are \$61,053 less than last year and \$66,894 less than budget. Mailing and Labor were down by \$17,789 when compared to last year. Postage was down by \$46,228 mainly caused by a catalog being printed and sent out last year.

The Editorial Services line is higher in 2018 compared to 2017 by \$95,366 due to the ASL project taking place in the beginning of this year. Selling expenses are less than last year by \$239,969 mainly caused by the catalog being printed in the first ten months of last year and \$185,000 of this savings is caused by less credit card processing fees.

Professional fees are \$52,591 higher than budget and \$76,196 lower than 2017. The \$135,000 settlement for the manuscript case is the reason we were over budget for the first ten months of 2018.

Contracted Services are under budget by \$4,655 and over last year by \$32,962.

Office Service and Expense is \$74,783 (23.98%) higher than budget and \$135,135 (53.74%) higher than last year. These variances are mainly due to the Conference audio-visual costs being higher this year as opposed to last year.

Travel, Meetings and Accommodations are \$422,377 (51.87%) over last year. This is because the Conference was held in Rye last year and in New York City this year and the World Service Meeting being held this year.

The Analysis of Sales report shows that the Big Book is up by 12,710 units sold this year compared to last year and that *Daily Reflections* is up by 9,662 units sold this year compared to last year.

Self-Support: the committee discussed developing a Seventh Tradition impact report which could include a few stories about the people who have benefited from how contributions are funding our various services, as well as our level of self-support.

Publishing

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

Gross sales: October gross sales are above budget with actual gross sales at \$1,357,089, which is a \$200,644 or 17.35% positive variance against budget of \$1,156,445.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for October stand at \$821,032. Total online orders for October are 1,584 or 63.13% of total orders. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for October are \$565,693, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$255,339.

Digital books: Total ebook gross sales through October stand at \$182,948, with 46,848 units distributed.

License renewals: Australia, Belgium, Chile, Finland, Latvia and Mexico have requested license renewals; the license renewals for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Great Britain, Lithuania, Thailand and Turkey are in process. Other notable international licensing and translation activity is taking place in: Bahrain, Cuba, Denmark, Hungary, Iran, Iceland, India, Russia and Ukraine.

Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1971: Estimated availability of finished books in English, French and Spanish is on track for publication in mid-April 2019.

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

- That the A.A.W.S. Policy on Publication of Literature, as amended, be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Literature and the 2019 Conference Literature Committee for review.

- That the selling price for *Our Great Responsibility: A Selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks, 1951-1971* be \$10.00 in all three languages.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The TCS Committee reviewed the minutes of G.S.O.'s Website Committee.

Oral reports were given by the director of I.T. Services and the Group Services assignment regarding their recent activities. The director of I.T. services noted that multiple departments are in the process of reviewing their testing scripts and there will be heavy testing through the holidays. Data conversion is ongoing and warehouse integration is underway. Grapevine integration is planned for phase 2 of the project. The staff member on the Group Services assignment reported on a new linguistic Intergroup comprised of Deaf members in central Texas; a request from the "Secular A.A." organization to be listed as a Special International Contact. He also reported on a meeting with the New York Intergroup Steering Committee where they expressed concerns that adding meeting finder technology to aa.org as part of the proposed redesign may diminish their online literature sales and contributions.

Oral updates were also provided by the general manager covering progress on the website design and implementing our

app with the Meeting Guide technology. It was reported that the contract with the website vendor was ended; nevertheless, there are many assets from the work with the vendor that will be transferable to a new vendor when one is identified. The general manager also reported on the A.A.W.S. app stating that it would launch before the website and would be designed to deliver the essentials with a framework to support significant updates. It was suggested that the app contain enough components to capture the attention of its users on the initial launch.

The director of administration and staff services reported that by the end of January 2019 legal counsel would provide an umbrella privacy policy to cover both A.A. World Services and AA Grapevine. This policy would be needed to protect a shared shopping cart between the two corporations and the international registrations for the 2020 International Convention.

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

- That the proposed General Service Conference agenda item for the removal of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services YouTube channel be forwarded to the trustees' Committee on Public information.

Internal Audit

The Directors and Management RACI matrices are still in process, with completion expected in January 2019. Six actions outlined in September are progressing and a plan to complete the A.A.W.S. Emergency Response-Business Continuity Plan was presented to management. The committee received the annual review of Insurance Coverage. The management team agreed to develop a report with a full listing of the current or planned audits, gap assessments or consultant reviews that are on schedule at G.S.O. for the committee's oversight. The committee reviewed a memorandum providing an update regarding G.S.O. management's action to engage outside counsel to review the committee's work to-date related to the identified audit items for four functional areas: Directors, Finance, Human Resources and Management.

Additional Activities

The ad hoc Pricing, Discounts and Distribution Committee (also known as the DELTA Project): The board discussed an update and recommendations regarding discounts, shipping/handling charges and order processing procedures. Discussion will continue at subsequent meetings.