

**Area 15 State Convention Committee presentation**  
**April 11, 2026**

**TOPIC:** How the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee, the Area 14 and Area 15 Florida State Convention committees, and individual Florida State Convention committees are guided by Concept X

**PRESENTERS:** Karen V, Donna W, Debbie C

**Introduction: Donna W**

How many of you have read the Twelve Concepts for World Service as they appear in *The A.A. Service Manual* and wondered: What in the world does all this have to do with how I carry out my A.A. service role? I know for me, the way I felt when I was reading the Concepts for the first time was similar to the way I felt when I was taking Algebra I in ninth grade. I wondered how any of it would ever apply to my real life.

As I've continued to learn and grow in general service, I've come to understand how *practical* the Concepts are. They certainly are spiritual in nature, but they also serve as a real-life guide for applying spiritual principles to our service work.

As I came into this particular service role as chair of the Area 15 State Convention Committee and my adjacent role as a member of the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee, both of which are woven into my responsibilities as Area 15 alternate delegate, I've developed an appreciation for the extremely practical nature of Concept X.

Here is how Concept X reads in the long form:

*Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority – the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

Concept X suggests that our service structure cannot function effectively and harmoniously unless, at every level, each operational responsibility is matched by a corresponding authority to discharge that authority. Authority must be delegated at every level, and the responsibility and authority of every entity must be well defined and clearly understood.

Here is a passage from Concept X that explains this idea in more detail:

*An outstanding characteristic of every good operational structure is that it guarantees harmonious and effective function by relating its several parts and people in such a way that none can doubt what their respective responsibilities and corresponding authorities actually are. Unless these attributes are well defined; unless those holding the final authority are able and willing properly to delegate and maintain a suitable operational authority; unless those holding*

*such delegated authority feel able and willing to use their delegated authority freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations — then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable.*

When it comes to the Florida State Convention, a mammoth entity in terms of both human and financial resources, delegated authority and defined scope are crucial. With so many moving parts, imagine the chaos that would ensue if one hand didn't know what the other hand was doing, if we were unclear about who was responsible for what, if we had no idea about who had authority over which part of the project.

While the structure that has been set in place to ensure the success of each Florida State Convention is somewhat complex, it has stood the test of time and has contributed to decades of successful state conventions, largely due to the guidance we find in Concept X.

What we hope to do in this presentation is share with you how three distinct but interrelated entities – the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee, the two general service area standing committees, and the individual state convention committees themselves – come together to deliver a beautiful outcome year after year.

Karen is going to begin by telling us about the operational responsibility and the corresponding authority to discharge that authority of the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee. I will then share on the responsibility and authority of the North Florida Area 14 and South Florida Area 15 state convention committees. And finally, Debbie will share on the responsibility and authority of the state convention committees themselves.

### **The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee's role/Karen V**

Just as a reminder, here is the long form of Concept X:

*Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority—the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee was created at the 34<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention in August 1990. From this point forward, all motions pertaining to the operations of the Joint Advisory Committee have been recorded in a document titled “Florida State Convention Advisory Committee Record of Resolutions.” The Record of Resolutions consists of motions that have been passed, some of which are ongoing practices, known as “current practice.”

Committee members' responsibilities, as well as their service authority and the scope of that authority, are clearly defined within the committee's bylaws and are as follows:

- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee shall be composed of all members of the Board of Directors and shall have powers delegated to it by the Board.
- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee shall create a standard convention bid packet and revise as necessary to assist interested parties in preparing viable bids for future conventions.
- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee shall review all convention bids, granting authorization to each viable bid committee to participate in the site selection process during the convention.
- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee shall review and approve all convention bids prior to their presentation at the site selection meeting during the convention.
- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee shall monitor the operations and finances of the conventions (past, current, and future).

Besides executing the duties described in the bylaws, the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring that everything recorded in the Record of Resolutions is followed.

Here is how this all ties into Concept X:

- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee's authority is defined by the bylaws included in the Record of Resolutions, which is a living document because motions, which sometimes entail additional responsibilities, continually are being added to it.
- The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee balances authority – the power to act – and duty to Florida State Convention committees. The Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee is responsible to current and future Florida State Conventions, ensuring that they are able to host financially successful conventions.
- Members of the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee are empowered to make decisions based on their experience as long as they stay within their defined roles. For example, the committee's treasurer is authorized to write a check for seed money to help launch a new Florida State Convention committee, but the treasurer is *not* authorized to call a meeting of the committee to order.
- Similarly, the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee sets the site selection meeting at Florida State Conventions, but convention attendees have authority to choose from among two or more bid committees and select who will chair a future Florida State Convention.

The underlying principle of Concept X is clarity. When it comes to service responsibility being matched by an equal service authority with the scope of such authority well-defined, the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee is a good example of these words from our co-founder Bill W:

*“It is perfectly clear,” says Bill, “that when delegated authority is operating well, it should not be constantly interfered with.” Otherwise, he warns, “those charged with operating responsibly will be demoralized ... To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.”*

## **The role of the two area State Convention Committees/Donna W**

Now we’re going to move into the roles and responsibilities of the North Florida Area 14 and South Florida Area 15 state convention committees, both of which are standing committees similar to other standing committees such as Corrections, Literature and Grapevine/La Vina.

The South Florida Area 15 body, via Motion 546, created the Area 15 State Convention Committee in 2005. Around the same time, the North Florida Area 14 body created the Area 14 Oversight Committee. The purpose of both area committees is to serve as an additional level of protection, in cooperation with the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee, to ensure that individual Florida State Conventions are properly supported. The specific ways the two area committees support Florida State Conventions are outlined in the committees’ Composition, Scope and Procedure, which correspond to the Joint Advisory Committee’s Record of Resolutions that Karen told us about.

I will be speaking today about the Area 15 State Convention Committee, but keep in mind that the North Florida Area 14 Oversight Committee operates in a similar way.

The fact that the Area 15 State Convention Committee has a composition, scope and procedure, which is updated as appropriate, goes right to the heart of Concept X’s insistence that every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, and that the scope of such authority should always be well defined by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description, or by appropriate charters and bylaws. The Area 15 State Convention Committee’s roles and corresponding authority are distinct from the roles and corresponding authority of the Joint Advisory Committee. They are equally distinct from individual state convention committees.

Let’s take a look at this document that we refer to as our Composition, Scope and Procedure, which clearly defines the committee’s roles and responsibilities as well as its service authority.

Our composition, in other words, who serves on the committee, are as follows:

- The South Florida Area 15 alternate delegate, who serves as committee chairperson
- An appointed member with Florida State Convention organizational experience and/or hotel contract experience appointed by the committee chairperson who serves as the committee’s secretary/treasurer.

- The chairperson of the current and upcoming Florida State Conventions when those conventions are held in the geographic boundary of South Florida Area 15

As you can see, we comply with that composition. I serve as committee chair by virtue of being the current alternate delegate; Karen serves by virtue of her former state convention experience as well as her extensive hotel contract experience; and Debbie serves by virtue of being chair of the 69<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention because that convention is being held within our area's geographic boundaries.

Note that the chair of this summer's 68<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention does not serve as a member of the committee. Why? Because that convention is being held in Orlando, which is in the geographic boundary of North Florida Area 14. The reason why Allen C is not with us here today is because he is giving a report at the North Florida Area 14 Oversight Committee, where he serves as a member.

Let's look now at the delegated authority of the Area 15 State Convention Committee, which in keeping with Concept X, is well defined in our scope. The Area 15 State Convention Committee:

- Reviews bids for conventions that will be held in the geographic boundary of South Florida Area 15.
- Manages the site selection process for Florida State Conventions in coordination with the Joint Advisory Committee.
- Sets the Joint Advisory Committee reserve fund level, periodically reviewing it for possible revision.

When the Florida State Convention is held in the geographic boundary of South Florida Area 15, the committee has these additional responsibilities:

- It provides oversight of the legal and financial activities of the Florida State Convention.
- It receives and monitors profit and loss/budget vs. actual financial statements of the local hosting committee.
- It ensures that the convention remains self-supporting, utilizing the existing 501(c)(3) and the Joint Advisory Committee.
- It receives full disclosure of minutes and/or treasury information as requested.
- It receives the final report at the conclusion of the convention.

The two area convention committees are integrally connected to the Joint Advisory Committee. The alternate delegates of both area committees are members of the Joint Advisory Committee, alternately serving as secretary and treasurer. We maintain close contact, sharing minutes of our meetings. We give reports out of our area committees when we attend quarterly meetings of the Joint Advisory Committee, which generally occur one month after our area committee meetings. And each area committee welcomes the chair of the upcoming Florida State Convention Committee, when that convention is held within its geographic boundaries, to become a member of the area State Convention Committee.

## **The role of individual Florida State Convention Committees/Debbie C**

I find it interesting to look at the short form and the long form of a Concept or Tradition to see what was added or omitted. In the case of Concept X, the difference between the two seems to be the multiple ways in which a service responsibility can be matched with responsibility:

*Short form: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.*

*Long form: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority— the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws.*

The service responsibility of hosting a Florida State Convention is three-fold: financial, including contracts and funding; spiritual, focused on the integrity of the process and being guided by the Traditions; and physical, organizing committees, activities and volunteers and creating a space that is free for our attendees to have a remarkable and spiritual experience without having to handle the details.

There is a tremendous financial responsibility in hosting a Florida State Convention. A convention handles upward of \$200,000 in business. The convention chairperson negotiates the contract terms and conditions, works with their treasurer to present the bid package to the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee for approval, and oversees all aspects of the convention. In most cases, the chairperson assumes responsibility for contracts, contract terms and business responsibilities. This is in addition to the items that are collectively negotiated and agreed to at the Joint Advisory Committee level, such as the website and other shared items that are passed from convention to convention.

Each Florida State Convention is an individual business with a business entity created under the Joint Advisory Committee's 501-3-C corporation. The 69<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention's "doing business as" name is the 69<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention. The convention chair and treasurer serve as members of the Joint Advisory Committee.

Each Florida State Convention host committee is autonomous in how they set up their structure. The 69<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention created a guidance committee, which is a level of matched service responsibility. This seven-member committee includes the chairperson and treasurer, as well as the secretary, alternate chair and several other committee chairpersons, chosen for their role in the convention and their experience. At Guidance, business and committee activities are reviewed as a group and decisions are made as a group, incorporating the group conscience.

Guidance members liaise with our committee chairs, each of whom takes responsibility for a specific area of the convention, so Guidance serves as the committee chairpersons' service authority and guarantees that we are conducting ourselves within the collective group entity of

the host committee. Committee responsibilities such as golf course location, parking, entertainment, speaker selection, workshop creation, marathon meetings, sporting events, Al-anon and LGBT program tracks, and many more items, are discussed within a committee, then presented to the Guidance committee and approved together, staying true to the concept of scope of authority.

Overall, each Florida State Convention committee, as a host committee, is fully autonomous and fully accountable for the creation, preparation, execution and delivery of the State Convention for which we are in service to, but we function within the Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee and area State Convention Committees' guidelines.

In addition to being guided by Concept X, Florida State Conventions also observe Tradition Two. Here, we see the "group conscience" as the ultimate authority and the "trusted servant" as the delegated authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a right and harmonious working balance. And that is certainly what individual Florida State Convention committees strive for.