

# Highlights From A.A.W.S.

December 9, 2016

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, December 9, 2016, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Joe D. opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.

## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Greg T., reported on the following:

*Information Technology* – The IT team continues working to streamline the contributions department processes, develop a disaster recovery plan, and implement Phase II of our accounting system: Traverse – AR, AP, GL.

*Administrative Services* – The realignment of staff assistant responsibilities continues, along with cross training and other educational opportunities for administrative personnel. The Records Department will begin adding new area and district chairs to the database. Twenty-four large group tours of the office have been accommodated in 2016, with two more scheduled before the end of the year.

*Archives* – A large number of subject files are being reviewed and weeded out in accordance with the recommendations provided by our records management consultant.

*Human Resources* – We are in our second year with Oxford, our current health insurance provider, and have seen only an approximate 6% increase in premiums from last year. We have switched dental plan providers recently to Guardian which will increase those premiums by just 8%. A draft of a new Telecommuting/Working from Home policy has been approved by the management committee.

### October, November Travel:

*October 21-27, 2016:* 24th World Service Meeting, Rye Brook, NY.

*November 5-6, 2016:* G.M/G.S.O. and GV staff attended Intergroup/Central Office Seminar, Kansas City, MO.

*November 17-19, 2016:* A.A.W.S. vs. Knight Mediation, Toronto, ON

## STAFF REPORT

Communication Services met to finalize implementation of the opt-out alternative for service kits and workbooks delivery. New avenues of communication were opened between Texas A.A. and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice through a special meeting with area corrections chair that was also attended by the current chair of the trustees' Committee on Corrections. The *Loners Internationalists Meeting* (LIM) confidential directories have been updated and mailed to LIM members. In addition to the print version of the World Service Meeting Final Report, an anonymity-protected digital version will also be prepared for posting on the WSM Dashboard. The Holiday issue of *Box 4-5-9* has been distributed and is available on G.S.O.'s website. The deadline for regional trustee candidate resumes in the East Central and Southeast regions, and for Trustee-at-Large/U.S. is January 1, 2017. An agency to distribute and track the video P.S.A. "I Have Hope" in English and French, and to redistribute "Tengo Esperanza," in Spanish has been selected, to begin airing in January 2017. A number of service material documents have been sent to the Publishing Department for review for accuracy and current usage.

## TECHNOLOGY / COMMUNICATION / SERVICES

The committee reviewed a report on G.S.O.'s A.A. website analytics from August 2016 through October 2016; discussed a suggestion to add an option to G.S.O.'s records for A.A. entities to be listed as either a meeting or a group; received a report on the National A.A. Technology Workshop (November 18-20, 2016 in Winston-Salem, NC) from staff member Rick Walker.

The committee also discussed the pending period for new groups being added to G.S.O.'s list, and whether some information clarifying the purpose of the pending period should be developed. The committee noted that the 1991 Advisory Action that instituted the pending period states that it was "in order to allow the local A.A. structure to participate in the process." However, different areas have interpreted the pending period in different ways. The committee asked for additional background, and agreed to continue this discussion at a subsequent meeting.

## PUBLISHING

*Gross sales:* October gross sales are under budget with actual gross sales at \$1,121,498, which is a \$326,726 or 22.56% negative variance against budget of \$1,448,215. For 2016 through the month of October, gross sales are under estimate: \$11,313,770 actual sales vs. estimate of \$11,581,628, which is a \$267,858 or 1.41% negative variance. The *A.A. History Shelf* item is showing robust sales with 730 sets (678 English, 20 French and 32 Spanish) ordered to date.

*Web sales:* Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for October 2016 stand at \$726,608, which accounts for about 66.33% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for October are \$532,080 and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$194,528.

*Digital books:* Total ebook gross sales for January through September 2016 stand at \$168,007 with 42,937 units distributed.

*International licensing and translation:* The following Big Book translations and/or print runs are in process: Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Kenya, Mongolia, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and Ukraine, among others. The Middle Eastern Regional Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous (MERCAA) is reviewing submissions of completed Arabic translations of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Living Sober*. "Nameless Sobers" Iran A.A. has been licensed to translate *Came to Believe* and *As Bill Sees It* into Farsi. A Turkish translation of *Daily Reflections* has been submitted for review by Turkey G.S.B. French-speaking literature committees of Belgium, France, and Switzerland have requested joint licensing, similar to what is currently in place with German-speaking Europe.

The committee requested that the Publishing Department not proceed with a local effort to record the twelve Concepts (Long Form) in audio until further background information is obtained. The committee also discussed various aspects of providing an anonymity-protected digital version of the Final Conference Report. It was the general consensus of the committee that this is an issue which should be discussed by the Conference.

The committee discussed the audiobooks project and requested that the Publishing Department bring back a recommendation including details of the proposed strategic approach (i.e., marketing, availability, translations), including costs for French and Spanish translations.

## FINANCE

The G.S.O. ten-month unaudited financial report, revealed that net sales were \$11,072,966 or \$296,283 (2.6%) less than budget; Contributions were \$690,345 greater than budget; an improvement from the \$618,638 reported for Contributions at September 30th. Expenses for the ten-month period were \$508,761 less than budget and \$156,109 greater than at October 31, 2015. This compares with expenses being \$690,129 less than budget at September 30, 2016. Net profit for the ten months as noted above was \$819,446, which compared with the budgeted loss of \$287,977 and the ten-month 2015 loss of \$60,832.

The committee reviewed draft information for the 2017 budget reflecting an increase in the salary line to allow for possible adjustments to salary ranges following a review of all job positions at G.S.O. by the compensation consultant. The budget draft still has assumptions of flat dollar sales for 2017 and contributions approximately 8% over the 2016 budget.

General Manager Greg Tobin reported on pending modifications to the shipping department mail room which were not included in either Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the Construction project. The Board considered that these costs would be capitalized and depreciated over time, starting in 2017, and approved this expenditure.

The committee **recommended** that a special schedule (report) be provided at the January meeting that includes all non-salary, IT related costs for 2016 (actual) and 2017 (estimate). The committee also **recommended** that the Finance Department create an analysis and timeline for restructuring the budgeting, accounting and reporting for all non-salary IT costs, to be implemented in 2018. The recommendations were **approved**.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

The Board discussed a communication from Robert Wilcox, chair of the trustees' International Committee on the subject of a "Self-support strategy for the World Service Meeting," which will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

It was **recommended** that the service material document on Safety presented by G.S.O. staff be approved and sent for legal review, with final editing provided by Publishing. The recommendation was **approved**. It was also recommended that Publishing develop, with input from staff, a Safety card, and that it be brought back to the Board to review.

It was **recommended** that the 2016 International Convention database, and future International Convention databases, be available to both the A.A. World Services, Inc. and A.A. Grapevine, Inc. Boards for communications with registrants for purposes in addition to the International Convention. The first contact would be from A.A. World Services, Inc., with an opt-in option. The recommendation was **approved**.

Based on how large A.A.W.S. has grown, it was **recommended** that a subcommittee be formed to plan for the creation of an A.A.W.S. Audit Committee. The recommendation was **approved**.

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