

# Highlights from A.A.W.S.

September 14, 2018

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, September 14, 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:

*Information Technology* – The first NetSuite process walk-throughs for the Finance Department (general ledger, accounts payable and accounts receivable), internal procurement, and Publishing Department (order entry, customer service and ecommerce) are complete. Inventory management and contributions (including Contributions Department customer service) will be completed by the first week in October.

The Website Design Committee received first draft wireframes for the aa.org home page (desktop and mobile platforms). Moving forward, the process will be accelerated, evolving away from a committee model to a project management model.

*Administrative Services* – Staff and staff assistants are preparing for rotation. The METS team continues planning for the W.S.M., G.S.B. meetings for 2020 and 2021, as well as Regional Forums.

*Human Resources* – A number of employees have transitioned from temporary to regular fulltime positions, with additional temporary support services positions approved going forward. Zenaida Medina, accounting department manager was promoted to the position of assistant director of Finance.

### August – September Travel:

September 7-9: Pacific Regional Forum, San Jose, CA.  
September 10-12: 2020 Int'l Convention sit visit, Detroit, MI.

## Staff Report

*Communication Services* – The Website Design Committee has been discussing development of the meeting finder component of the app and a YouTube posting policy. September 14-16 the Communications Services coordinator will be attending the National A.A. Technology Workshop.

*Conference* – The 2018 Conference *Final Report* is planned for delivery in September. Both the print and anonymity-protected, digital versions will be available about the same time. Informal meetings have been held with the Finance and METS departments to review planning for next year's Conference, to discuss hotel arrangements and review reimbursement of delegate expenses.

*C.P.C.* – The C.P.C. coordinator and Class A trustee Nancy

McCarthy gave an interactive workshop on “How the A.A. Program Can Help Justice-Involved Individuals” at the American Probation and Parole Association Convention in Philadelphia.

*Corrections* – In July and August, the assignment coordinator 217 requests from incarcerated A.A.'s, with another 60 Corrections Correspondence Service requests received in August.

*International* – Final preparations for the 25th World Service Meeting are being made. Currently 73 delegates from 46 countries are expected to attend, including Bolivia and Turkey, who will be attending for the first time.

*Literature* – Three subcommittees of the trustees' Literature Committee continue work on projects to update the pamphlets “Young People and A.A.,” “The Twelve Traditions Illustrated,” and “Too Young?” In accordance with Advisory Actions of the 2018 General Service Conference, member submissions are being received for development of two new pamphlets: one on A.A.'s Three Legacies and the other pertaining to Spanish-speaking women alcoholics in A.A.

*Treatment and Accessibilities* – Staff is compiling materials to be considered for a remote communities' committee kit. Shared experience has been solicited from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing regarding the types of technology used for participation in A.A. In addition, groups have been asked about how they are lowering access barriers in carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

## Finance

Gross sales through the first eight months of 2018 were \$13,301 or 0.14% ahead of budget. Contributions were \$98,391 or 1.90% ahead of budget and total operating expenses were \$224,356 or 2.01% more than budget. Net gain for the eight months was \$334,198 compared with a budgeted gain of \$386,089.

The following variances were noted for the eight months: The Salary line was \$194,903 (4.13%) more than budget and \$558,936 (12.82%) more than the eight months ended August 31, 2017 due to several more positions in the first eight months of 2018 compared to the same period last year. The Other Program Printing expenses are \$109,126 less than last year,

partially caused by the Conference Final Report being printed in August of last year and not yet printed this year. The Editorial Services line is higher by \$106,521 in 2018 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 \$200,545, mainly caused by the catalog being printed in the first eight months of last year, with \$150,000 of this savings caused by less credit card processing fees. Professional fees are \$97,820 higher than budget and \$49,256 higher than 2017, related to the manuscript case settlement. Contracted Services are under budget by \$21,350 and over last year by \$9,260. Office Service and Expense is \$87,935 (38.80%) higher than budget and \$132,256 (72.55%) higher than last year mainly due to the Conference audio-visual costs being higher this year as opposed to last year. Travel, Meetings and Accommodations are \$319,362 (54%) over last year because the Conference was held in Rye last year and in New York City this year.

The Ad-hoc Self-Support Committee suggested and the board concurred that a Grapevine director be invited to participate as part of the committee.

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

- That A.A.W.S. extend a credit advance of \$10,000 to Costa Rica to fulfill a literature order in the amount of \$10,322.82.

## Publishing

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

*Gross sales:* July gross sales are above budget with actual gross sales at \$1,193,752, which is a \$37,881 or 3.28% positive variance against budget of \$1,155,871.

*Web sales:* Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for July stand at \$789,293. Total online orders for July is 1,458, which is 67.34% of total orders. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for July are \$565,302, and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$223,991.

*Digital books:* Total e-book gross sales through July stand at \$129,381, with 33,070 units distributed.

*Staff travel:* Juliette L., the Publishing Department's in-house French Editor/Translator attended Québec's 18th Native American A.A. Convention held August 24–26 on the remote "Côte Nord" reservation. Juliette was able to benefit from sharing regarding French Native and First Nations vocabulary that is helpful for the first-ever French translation of "A.A. for the Native North American" pamphlet, currently in progress.

The committee reviewed a comprehensive report on consultant projects for the years 2017-2018 (listed as part of the Publishing Department's independent audits) including total fees, deliverables and status of each project. It was discussed that beyond the projects listed in the report, no further projects were anticipated for this year.

The committee also discussed several suggestions submitted by the Publishing Department regarding stock depletion

and re-promotion opportunities for the facsimile first printing of the First Edition *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The committee encouraged the Publishing Department to move forward as appropriate and requested updates as the process continues.

The committee began discussions of proposed revisions to the existing A.A.W.S. Policy on Literature which in its present form presents a narrow scope with respect to A.A.W.S.'s ability to review/revise A.A. pamphlets and books for linguistic/historical relevance and currency. The committee agreed to continue discussions at the October meeting.

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

- That the pamphlet "The 'God' Word" be priced at \$0.40 per unit in English, French and Spanish.

## 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 progress on the new ERP system is continuing and she continues writing policies and procedures and a Security Awareness policy to comply with the GAP Assessment performed earlier this year. New wireless access points were purchased and installed to conform to PCI Compliant rules. The Group Services coordinator reported that the majority of changes to be implemented in service committee kits for 2019 have been received and are being implemented.

The committee discussed suggestions for A.A.W.S., Inc.'s policy on posting videos on the A.A.W.S. YouTube channel and considered how the proposed policy corresponds with the 2015 Advisory Action on new service material created by G.S.O. It was noted that the Advisory Action is about service material videos produced by G.S.O. and does not address Conference-approved videos. The committee also discussed the 2016 report from a subcommittee of the trustees' Public Information Committee that proposed housing A.A. video content in a single location on YouTube. There was some clarification requested regarding authority to post and remove videos from the YouTube Channel. The committee asked that the draft posting policy be further developed for their review at their October meeting.

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

- That G.S.O. management be authorized to engage a vendor at a cost not to exceed \$50,000 for implementation of the Meeting Guide to be used in the A.A.W.S. app and on G.S.O.'s A.A. website.

## Internal Audit

The committee discussed four areas of oversight that require an audit or internal monitoring: Directors, Finance, Human Resources and Management. The committee is documenting who is responsible and accountable, in addition to who needs to be consulted and informed on each function, and is requesting information from several vendors related

to the development and performance of internal audits and reviews of all of financial and non-financial controls. The committee also discussed the update and implementation of a disaster recovery plan and an ongoing review of internal privacy policies.

### **Additional Activities**

*DELTA Project:* The board discussed an update and recommendations from the Ad-Hoc Committee on Pricing, Distribution and Discounts (the DELTA Project) regarding discounts, shipping/handling charges and order processing procedures. Discussion will continue at subsequent meetings.