

Highlights from A.A.W.S.

July 29, 2021

The A.A. World Services Board met via videoconference on Thursday, July 29, 2021.
Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Jimmy D., welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting with a moment of silence.

General Manager's Report

General Manager Bob W. provided the following report:

The new general manager, Robert (Bob) W., started Tuesday, June 1. He attended the Asia-Oceania Service Meeting and the Al-Anon 70th Anniversary Celebration, citing the impressive virtual flag ceremony.

In July, Linda Chezem (GSB chair), Jimmy D. (A.A.W.S. chair) and Josh E. (AAGV chair), traveled to GSO. After the long period of lockdowns, they wanted to express their gratitude and support in person to all the employees of the office. Although the office is still operating virtually, over 50 employees arrived and worked in the office that day, many for the first time since March 2020. The three chairs attended a Finance Advisory Board Meeting, an "All Employee Huddle," and participated in the Wednesday afternoon GSO Staff Meeting where all in attendance shared openly on how to harness the operational principles embodied within the Concepts, Traditions and Steps.

Archives

The Archives staff continues to receive many research inquiries that include requests for assistance to prepare presentations at local service events, requests for various items available from the Archives, requests for historic background on the development of service entities and A.A. history in general. From January through mid-July, the Archives staff responded to approximately 550 inquiries.

The department is currently assisting South Africa with their anniversary celebration by providing historical information related to A.A. in that country. A.A. in South Africa is celebrating 75 years and the local members are putting together a series of events to commemorate the Jubilee celebration starting October 2021.

Human Resources

AnneMarie Ceri (nonalcoholic) joined the Operations team as a Member and Customer Service associate. Kyle Zaczek (nonalcoholic) joined the Archives department as assistant archivist. Omar Gil (nonalcoholic) was promoted to facilities manager.

Operations

The first quarterly sharing session with the area registrars

was scheduled for Monday, July 26, with 46 area registrars attending. These sessions provided valuable input and feedback to enhance and roll out future releases of Fellowship Connection.

The new Member and Customer Service team officially launched on June 28, 2021. Each associate has access to an app that is installed on their cell phone and allows the Member and Customer Service direct line (212-870-3023) to display on the customer's phone when receiving a call from the Member and Customer Service team at GSO. The team is also utilizing a customer communication platform system which combines the simplicity of email with the intelligence of a CRM (customer relationship management) to improve the customer experience. This system is improving overall email efficiency by helping to manage and organize the shared inbox (memberandcustomerservice@aa.org) and allowing the manager to better support workflow.

Technology Services

Technology Services continues to play a significant role managing the new aa.org development project, including managing the development vendor, and identifying risks and risk mitigation options. The team also supports the implementation of the new Member and Customer Service department, including both the ERP platform and Front for email management.

Staff Services

The director of staff services and the staff coordinator gave verbal updates highlighting:

Half of GSO staff members have rotated on to another assignment as of July 29.

The Conference desk is preparing a communication to inform the Fellowship of the new deadline for proposed agenda items from December 15 to September 15.

The visit of the three board chairs to the office and their participation in the weekly staff meeting provided a great opportunity for sharing. Several of the topics discussed were: the board chair's perspective on important aspects of support that GSO staff and staff assignments can provide; the pros and cons of returning to a townhall style format for the general sharing sessions and possibly the 1728 meetings held during

General Service Board weekends; the roles and participation of GSO staff and the boards within the General Service Conference process.

The 2025 International Convention planning process has accelerated. The staff member on the assignment will rotate onto the 2025 International Convention in 2023. An announcement was sent out to the Fellowship requesting submissions for a theme.

The staff coordinator expressed how pleased staff members are having the general manager join their weekly staff meetings. Not only does he bring great topics of discussion, but the staff appreciates the dialogue and feels heard.

Administration

Return to the Workplace – The full return to the workplace, with some work from home eligibility, is set to begin October 1, 2021. The Human Resources department collaborated with the senior leadership team to assess job roles for eligibility to work from home 1-3 days per week and qualifying employees were notified of their eligibility. The Return to the Workplace Taskforce has invited back an epidemiologist to share any workplace trends and to help address employee questions, including questions on the Delta variant.

Finance

Revenue and Expense for the six months ended June 30:

Contributions year to date are \$4,976,316, which is 51% of the 2021 budget of \$9,725,000 and \$911,513 more than this time last year.

We budgeted for average contributions of \$810,417 per month. Over the first six months of the year, contributions are averaging \$829,386 per month.

Gross literature sales year to date are \$5,735,705 which is 65% of the 2021 budget of \$8,865,000 and \$837,572 more than last year. June gross sales were \$981,496, just missing becoming the second month over a \$1 million since February 2020. Gross sales in July as of the 16th are \$587,275, placing literature on track for a \$1 million month in July.

Payroll and benefits year to date are \$4,535,220, which is 49% of the budget amount of \$9,225,438 and \$83,668 less than last year. Total operating expense year to date is \$7,611,401 which is 53% of the budget amount of \$14,479,506 and \$75,068 more than last year. Total operating expense is more than budget primarily because of a change in the accounting for depreciation rather than an actual increase in expenses.

Surplus for the first six months is \$1,430,178 compared to a budget surplus for the year of \$641,388. The surplus is greater than budget primarily due to literature sales. We were able to budget a surplus because the General Service Conference was virtual and the Boards have not travelled or met in person so far this year.

Cash Position:

As of June 30, operating cash was \$1,543,954, which represents 1.3 months of operating expenses.

As of July 19, operating cash is \$1,620,415, which repre-

sents 1.3 months of expenses.

The board approved the following recommendation brought forward by the Finance Committee:

- To forward the 2021 Reforecast Budget 1.0 to the GSB Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee, stressing the utmost fiscal prudence.

Publishing

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

The publishing director shared that CD sets of the Big Book with new recordings in English, French and Spanish are in the manufacturing process with target in-warehouse dates of mid-September/early-October.

Update on 2021 A.A.W.S. Literature Special Offers and Test Pilots:

1. Five-month Test Pilot on Reduced Shipping Charges, continues through October 18, 2021. As of July 19, "Small Orders" (under \$25) total gross sales are \$35,328. In comparison to the same timeframe in 2020, there is a 31% decrease in number of orders, gross sales increased by \$4,939 and shipping cost decrease by \$4,567. As of July 19, all orders placed by Intergroups and Central Offices, total gross sales are \$106,683. In comparison to the same timeframe in 2020, there is a 45% decrease in number of orders, gross sales decreased by \$117,170, shipping cost decreased by \$279.

2. "A.A. in Your Pocket," continues through September 30, 2021. Focusing on Portable editions – buy any pocket editions and get \$1 off each. 304 orders have been placed, 56 of the orders were placed by Intergroups and Central Offices.

3. "Dynamic Duo," August 1 – September 30, 2021: Buy the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, hardcover (in English, French or Spanish) and get \$1 off *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* in any language and any format.

Semi-Annual Licensing and Translations Activity: For the period January-June 2020, activity continued at a fast pace in international licensing and translations. *Alcoholics Anonymous* is available in 73 languages, with 27 languages pending and 19 new translations in progress, along with eight revisions/retranslations. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* is available in 52 languages, with three translations pending. *Daily Reflections* is available in 38 languages, with two translations pending. *Living Sober* is available in 37 languages, with five translations pending. *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* is available in 19 languages, with two translations pending. For the period January-June 2021, the total number of translation reviews completed by our independent translation-evaluation services stands at 20 reviews across nine languages. India and Turkey, in particular, had multiple projects move forward. As of June 30, 2021, items of A.A. literature are available in 110 approved languages.

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

- The Publishing department proceed with the QSL video production of the pamphlet "Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers" at the total estimated cost of \$26,295.

- The Publishing department proceed with ASL video production of the pamphlet “Access to A.A.: Members Share on Overcoming Barriers” at an estimated amount not to exceed \$44,000.

- The Publishing department proceed with the production of the newly redesigned, revised and updated “A.A. Service Manual” in the following quantities, at a list price of \$4.00 per unit:

English: 50,000 copies

French: 3,000 copies

Spanish: 8,000 copies

Total: 61,000 copies

- The Publishing department proceed with the printing of the new pamphlet “Experience Has Taught Us: An Introduction to Our Twelve Traditions,” at the following quantities, at a selling price of \$0.36 per unit:

English: 25,000 copies

French: 2,000 copies

Spanish: 10,000 copies

Total: 37,000 copies

- The Publishing department proceed with the printing of the new pamphlet “Hispanic Women in A.A.” at the following quantities, at a selling price of \$0.35 per unit:

English: 15,000 copies

Spanish: 25,000 copies

Total: 40,000 copies

The board also discussed the delays the Publishing department is experiencing as a direct result of Covid’s impact on printers. As previously experienced, recent events have arisen that are negatively impacting the production supply-chain throughout the printing industry, and this is specifically impacting the timely printing of A.A.W.S. literature. Communications have been delivered to Intergroups and Central Offices and posted on aa.org and the webstore, notifying our members and other customers about a dramatic rise in Covid-19 outbreaks that have befallen at least two of our key printers, with tragic consequences and serious impacts. Printing industry experts indicate there may be ongoing disruptions and delays in the manufacturing and printing sector that could impact production of our A.A.W.S. literature and other items continuing into 2022.

Technology/Communication/Services (TCS)

The committee reviewed the minutes of GSO’s Website Committee, along with progress reports and updates.

Progress report on Website design – Plans are being finalized for the transition from the staging site to the production site. The staging environment was moved to the new Acquia platform, and the team has been getting familiar with navigating and using the new Acquia cloud site. Plans are being developed for a Winter launch.

Meeting Guide App – The A.A.W.S. App team, working with Foster Made, started work on a subsequent release, which will include: the ability to adjust the radius used when listing meetings and an attendance option to allow the user to filter by

in-person, virtual or all. A survey was sent out to connected entities to gather information on the barriers to connecting online meetings. The team believes the new feature will assist with the barriers conveyed.

Podcast – The Creative Team will be further exploring a theme related to the impact on A.A. during the pandemic. The team will be gathering more specific information in connection with how this theme could potentially be turned into a pilot podcast. If the team can successfully detail out specific logistical and creative considerations, they will then bring this idea to the larger working group for discussion. The Equipment-Logistics Team is considering the location and cost – at the General Service Office versus other sites.

LinkedIn – Since the June Board meeting the goal of having 1-2 posts was met. The Board Chair Announcement resulted in 1,230 impressions, 44 reactions, 119 clicks; and the General A.A. Press Release was posted. Further consideration for improvement with discussion on how Class As can help to bring awareness? Should we utilize hashtags? Are they an SEO/organizational tool or are they too close to affiliation?

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

- The June 22nd, 2021, Website Committee meeting minutes presented on July 29th be forwarded to the trustees’ Public Information Committee.

- The Second Quarter website report presented on July 29th be forwarded to the trustees’ Public Information Committee.

Internal Audit

The board approved the following recommendations brought forward by the Internal Audit Committee:

- The revised Internal Audit Committee Composition, Scope and Procedures be approved.

- The 2021-2022 Finance RACI be approved.

Additional Activities

The board approved the following recommendations:

- The termination of the AXA Equitable Defined Contribution Plan in favor of the TIAA Plan.

- The termination of the MetLife Defined Contribution Plan in favor of the TIAA Plan.

- The termination of the Mutual of America Defined Contribution Plan in favor of the TIAA Plan.