

April 2018

**GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE
COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS**

Agenda

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the 2018 General Service Conference Evaluation and noted that the evaluation is now available for delegates to fill out online.
- The committee reviewed the summary of the 2017 General Service Conference evaluations. Noting the low number of respondents, the committee reiterated the obligation that Conference members have to fill out the evaluation.
- The committee reviewed the report on the Conference Agenda Process from the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, which included the Trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference 2016 Report on the Agenda Item Selection Process.
- The committee noted that progress has been made on implementing the plan in the 2016 report. However, the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference forwarded a request to the General Service Board to continue to consider enhanced participation of area delegates in the process for selection of agenda items, and no action on this item was reported by the board.
- The committee noted the 2016 report suggested that:

Before the January board weekend, the entire Conference committee could have a conference call with the corresponding trustees' committee chair and staff secretary to review items submitted as agenda items and to talk about items still being considered by the trustees' committee. This way, Conference committee members would get a verbal report on the disposition of items submitted to the trustees' committee, and could share regarding those items. This would allow all Conference committee members to offer feedback on proposed Agenda items. Their feedback could be brought to the trustees' committee meeting as background for the discussion.
- The committee noted that this has not happened and requested that the trustees' committee chairs implement this conference call portion of the plan starting in January 2019.
- After reviewing the results of the survey of Conference committee chairs about the implementation of the 2016 plan, the committee requested that this sharing be

gathered from the Conference committee chairs annually and provided to the Conference Committee on Agenda.

- The committee requested the trustees' committee create a process for area delegate review of proposed agenda items that were not forwarded to a Conference committee and bring a report to the 2019 Conference Committee on Agenda.

Archives

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed a request from the AA Grapevine Board to post the audio recording of the 2017 General Service Conference presentation, "A.A. Grapevine and La Viña" on AA Grapevine's YouTube channel and took no action for the following reasons:
 - The request is not in accord with the current 2015 Conference Advisory Action, which states, "Audio recordings of General Service Conference final reports and audio recordings of the trustees' farewell talks given at the closing brunch be made available in accordance with Archives' policies. Access to all other General Service Conference sessions will continue to be prohibited."
 - The presentation mentions names of A.A. members.
 - The committee recognizes that the AA Grapevine Board might consider presenting the material at an A.A. event, such as a Regional Forum and post the recording of this on the AA Grapevine Board's YouTube channel.
 - The committee noted that the audience of General Service Conference presentations are Conference members only and that the focus is not the general public.
- The committee considered a request to develop a policy on distribution of audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations and took no action for similar reasons cited in the preceding committee consideration.
- The committee reviewed the Archives Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - In the sections, "What to Collect?", "Financing the Archives" and "Ownership of Material," add text in the appropriate sections that distinguishes archivists from historians and collectors. In addition, add text clarifying that archivists do not appraise items for monetary value and that archives generally do not purchase items. The committee suggested that this new text also be added to the "A.A. Archives" service piece.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

Committee Considerations:

- The committee strongly suggested that those creating the LinkedIn company page consider adding some kind of disclaimer or explanation clarifying that A.A. is not affiliated with any of the organizations who appear in promoted content on the LinkedIn company page.
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consult with health care professionals to determine if there are issues unique to problem drinkers in the military and military veterans, that would be helpful to cover in the pamphlet "A.A. as a Resource for Health Care Professionals."
- The committee reviewed the C.P.C. Kit and Workbook and made the following suggestions:
 - That the updated sample guide letters replace the guide letters currently in the workbook, and that utilizing the guide letters be mentioned in the "Suggested C.P.C. Committee Goals and Projects" section of the workbook.
 - That the "Suggested C.P.C. Committee Goals and Projects" section of the workbook mention contacting military bases and veterans' facilities.
 - That when listing professionals whom C.P.C. committees should approach in the workbook, that list should include professionals who come in contact with active members of the military and veterans whenever possible.
 - That the text of the pamphlet "Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends: Friends on the Alcoholism Front" which is currently reprinted in full in the C.P.C. workbook be removed from the workbook.
 - That the Membership Survey and the display of the Membership Survey be encouraged for use in C.P.C. work.
 - That we continue to look for opportunities to utilize Class A Trustees in C.P.C. work.

Corrections

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed the request to create a pamphlet for inmates who will be released after long-term incarceration and took no action. The committee suggested that correction service materials be revised for this purpose.

- The committee asked the trustees' Committee on Corrections to update the service materials, "A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information - For A.A.s on the Inside" and "A.A. Corrections Prerelease Contact Information - For A.A.s on the Outside" with excerpts from existing literature.
- The committee suggested that the trustees' Committee on Corrections create a letter to corrections professionals to raise awareness about prerelease and Bridging the Gap volunteers.
- The committee noted the benefits of identifying facilities with incarcerated alcoholics to effectively present A.A. to the professionals who work in these settings. This effort could inform the local Fellowship of the need for outside volunteers. The committee suggests the trustees' Committee on Corrections create a checklist for local committees to be included in the Corrections Kit.
- The committee noted that many correctional facilities have increased their security restrictions for paper materials and suggests the trustees' Committee on Corrections continue to work with the Publishing Department to insure access to A.A. materials for incarcerated alcoholics.
- The committee noted the progress made with producing dubbed versions of the video "A New Freedom" in Spanish and French and suggested adding this video to the Corrections Kit upon completion.
- The committee noted the progress made on the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) in Canada and looks forward to a progress report on this service at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee noted the value of peer-to-peer communications between corrections professionals and looks forward to the creation of letters for use in Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) and Corrections Committees.
- The committee suggested that the links displayed in the video "Carrying the Message Behind These Walls" be updated.
- The committee suggested the trustees' Committee on Corrections discuss ways to utilize A.A. materials for incarcerated alcoholics at juvenile facilities.

Finance

Committee Considerations:

- The committee discussed developing a method to standardize increases to the limits on individual contributions and bequests to the General Service Board and felt that the consumer price index fluctuates by such small proportions that a change would be costly and not conducive to the Fellowship and took no action.

- The committee reviewed the Self-Support Packet and made the following suggestions to the Publishing Department:
 - The pamphlets “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and “The A.A. Group Treasurer” be consistent in print and revision coding on the back.
 - Adding language regarding group level electronic contributions, passing the “virtual” basket, to the section Passing the Basket in the service piece “The A.A. Group Treasurer” and also be included in the pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” and the Guidelines on Finance.
 - Update illustrative material on the Seventh Tradition Fact Sheet (F-203) to reflect current pamphlet covers and website.
 - Update birthday contribution envelopes per member per year statistics.
- The committee had a discussion on the topic of AA Grapevine and suggested the following:
 - That there be a greater online presence.
 - A fact sheet on the topic of Grapevine be included in the Self-Support Packet.
 - That the General Service Board make available issues of Grapevine for distribution purposes through G.S.O. staff assignments.
- The committee requested that when A.A.W.S. develops an A.A. app that self-support information be easily accessible. The committee also discussed having access to assignment folders containing literature relevant to the services.

Grapevine

Committee Considerations

- The committee reviewed the 2018 Grapevine social media report regarding Instagram, Facebook, and Google for Nonprofits and suggests that A.A. Grapevine, Inc. continue to explore a social media strategy in their forthcoming strategic plan, taking into account issues regarding anonymity, security, affiliation, outside contributions, privacy and promotion.
- The committee reviewed the audio strategy report and thanked AA Grapevine, Inc. for including it in their forthcoming strategic plan.

- The committee agreed to forward to the AA Grapevine Corporate Board the suggestion that in the year 2019 or later Grapevine produce the following items:
 1. Our Twelve Steps II (working title)
Stories of experience by members about our Twelve Steps (our last Step book was in 2011).
 2. All About Grapevine Reps (working title)
Helpful and inspiring stories by A.A. members doing service with Grapevine and La Viña.
 3. Prayer & Meditation (working title)
A collection of stories by A.A. members about the many ways they practice Step Eleven.
 4. A.A. & Families (working title)
Stories by A.A. members that illustrate the many ways alcoholism and A.A. has touched our families.
 5. Hispanic Members Doing Service in A.A. (working title)
A collection of stories published in La Viña magazine by members getting sober and active, doing service and carrying the A.A. message.
- The committee reviewed the Grapevine Workbook and suggests that it undergo a comprehensive review and revision, and AA Grapevine, Inc. bring back a progress report to the 2019 Conference Committee on AA Grapevine.
- The committee discussed ways groups can be kept informed about Grapevine and La Viña and suggested that all current and past delegates consider it a part of their responsibility to inform the Fellowship about Grapevine and La Viña as tools of sobriety, either through their own efforts or by recruiting others through email and area websites.

International Conventions/Regional Forums

Committee Considerations:

- The committee requested that the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums review the Guidelines for Site Selection for the 2035 A.A. International Convention and explore expanding the window of dates in which the 2035 International Convention could be held.
- The committee noted that including forum attendee questionnaire summaries provided helpful information for discussions and suggested that they continue to be a part of the background for the Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums.

- The committee discussed ways of encouraging interest in Regional and Local Forums and attracting first time attendees and suggested:
 - Compiling notes from the first-timer sharing at a Forum for later distribution to encourage members to attend a future Forum.
 - Reaching out at the local level to young people in A.A. committees, continuing with one-to-one communication and spreading the word as far as possible.
 - Exploring sending Forum informational text blasts to members receiving La Viña text messages.
 - Highlighting that Forums have no registration fee which might appeal to newer members to explore service at this level.

Literature

Committee Considerations:

- The committee considered a request to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and took no action. The committee noted that the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement are adequately noted in other A.A. literature.
- The committee considered a request to add an endnote to Bill W.'s story in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* acknowledging co-founder, Bob S., and took no action. The committee noted that acknowledgement of Bob S. ("Dr. Bob") as cofounder is currently mentioned in two separate places in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
- The committee considered a request for the development of a new pamphlet for atheist and agnostic alcoholics and took no action. The committee agreed the recommendation that A.A.W.S. adopt/adapt the pamphlet "The God Word" responded to the need expressed by atheist and agnostic members of A.A.
- The committee requested that G.S.O. Publishing Department add AA Grapevine literature to the list of A.A. Publications noted on the back page of A.A. literature, as additional resources, when appropriate. For example, the AA Grapevine publication *Voices of Women in A.A.* could be added to the list of publications in the pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: Women and A.A." and AA Grapevine publication *Sober and Out* could be listed in the pamphlet "Experience, Strength and Hope: LGBTQ Alcoholics in A.A." and *In Our Own Words* could be included as a resource in the pamphlet "Young People and A.A."

- The committee reviewed the trustees' Literature Committee report on "Language Related to Safety in A.A. Literature." The committee requested that the trustees' Literature Committee develop text regarding safety in A.A. to be included in *Living Sober* and the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship," and bring back the draft text to the 2019 Conference Committee on Literature.
- The committee reviewed draft text for the pamphlet "The Twelve Traditions Illustrated," and offered additional suggestions for the trustees' Literature Committee to consider. The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or revised draft pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report on the revision of the pamphlet "Too Young?" The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee reviewed a progress report from the trustees' Literature Committee on the revision of the pamphlet "Young People and A.A." The committee looks forward to reviewing a progress report or draft revised pamphlet at the 2019 General Service Conference.
- The committee accepted the 2017 matrix of A.A. recovery literature.

Policy/Admissions

Committee Considerations:

- The committee accepted the dates April 25-May 1, 2021 for the 71st General Service Conference since these dates do not conflict with any significant holiday or hotel availability.
- The committee reviewed the report from G.S.O.'s general manager on site selection of the General Service Conference. The committee looks forward to a progress report for review by the 2019 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
- The committee reviewed the trustees' General Service Conference Committee's Report on Equitable Distribution of the Workload of Conference Committees. The committee encourages the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference to continue reviewing options in order to create a workable plan for equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees by combining and/or creating committees. The committee looks forward to a plan or progress report on this important process for review by the 2019 Conference Committee on Policy/Admissions.
- The committee discussed the request to develop a policy on the use of the Conference dashboard and suggested that the trustees' Committee on the General

Service Conference develop an information sheet that reflects shared experience and guidance on usage of the Conference dashboard.

- The committee discussed the question forwarded from the trustees' International Committee: "Does the U.S./Canada [service structure] have a role/responsibility in assisting the development of A.A. structures around the world through sponsoring other countries via direct invitations to observe our General Service Conference?" While wishing to remain open to requests from other country's boards/G.S.O.s, the committee agreed that the U.S./Canada service structure does not have a role/responsibility in assisting other countries *via direct invitations* to observe our General Service Conference rather than at their own request.

Public Information

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2017 annual report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding aa.org and aagrapevine.org.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2018 Public Information Comprehensive Media Plan and noted the importance of the trustees' continued exploration of social media and social network platforms to carry the A.A. message to the public.
- The committee reviewed and accepted the 2017 report from the trustees' Public Information Committee regarding the usefulness and relevance of video public service announcements.
- The committee reviewed the 2017 trustees' Public Information Committee Report on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants to carry the A.A. message and requested that the trustees' Committee on Public Information continue to develop information on the use of Google AdWords and Google Grants including information on the cost of implementing a six month trial and the cost of a full year's implementation and that a progress report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Public Information.
- The committee reviewed the contents of P.I. Kit and Workbook, and suggested that the information in the P.I. Workbook in the section Approaching Local Broadcast Facilities be updated to reflect changes in how G.S.O. delivers public service announcements.

Report and Charter

Committee Considerations:

- The committee accepted a report from the Publishing Department outlining the General Service Office process for timely and accurate preparation and publication of *The A.A.*

Service Manual, 2018-2020 Edition and the 2018 General Service Conference *Final Report*.

- The committee reviewed a list of editorial updates from the Publishing Department for *The A.A. Service Manual* and accepted the updates.
- In keeping with the 2009 Advisory Action that the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. Board and the Grapevine Board annually review *The A.A. Service Manual* and forward necessary updates to the Conference Committee on Report and Charter, the committee reviewed the updates from the General Service Board and the Grapevine Board.
- The committee considered a request to add text to *The A.A. Service Manual* regarding standing committees from “The A.A. Group” pamphlet and took no action. The committee suggested that the Publishing Department consider adding more language regarding local service committees in possible future service manual rewrites.
- The committee considered a request for changes to Chapters 2, 3, and 5 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and took no action. The committee suggested that if an extensive rewrite of the chapters is undertaken, the Publishing Department review these chapters for possible future editions of the manual.
- The committee considered a request to remove the statement from the section “Area Newsletters” in *The A.A. Service Manual*, “Any group or district of the Fellowship is free to use the circle and triangle on newsletters, meeting schedules or other A.A. material” and took no action. The committee noted that the statement as it stands is informative to those with questions concerning the circle and triangle.
- The committee considered a request to update the “Third Legacy Procedure” chart on page S22 in *The A.A. Service Manual* and suggested that the chart would be updated to correct inconsistencies.
- The committee reviewed a Publishing report with suggestions on how changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* could be made available to the Fellowship in non-printing years and took no action. The committee noted that substantive changes to *The A.A. Service Manual* can be found in the *Final Conference Report* and the Report and Charter Conference Committee’s History and Highlights of Actions.
- The committee discussed the A.A. Directories and noted there were no requests for changes at this time. The committee also reviewed a memo from the G.S.O. General Manager informing the committee that the A.A. Directories, Canada, Eastern U.S. and Western U.S. would not be printed in 2018 due to the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

Treatment and Accessibilities

Committee Considerations:

- The committee requested that the staff secretary forward suggested further revisions to the pamphlet “Accessibility for All Alcoholics” to the Publishing Department for consideration.
- The committee reviewed the report “Cooperation with Armed Services Exploration Strategies” from the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities and suggested the following:
 - Review existing literature and service material with a military focus to expand on the topic of accessibilities.
 - Consider including in existing A.A. literature shared experience from members on active duty as well as veterans.
 - Consider creating A.A. guidelines with a focus on carrying the message to those in the Armed Services.
 - Consider whether creating a PSA as a method of carrying the message to those in the Armed Services would be effective.
 - Consider the need for a national veteran’s workshop.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities focus on carrying the message to veterans in VA facilities, active service members stationed in local military facilities in the U.S. and Canada, and active military personnel who are deployed outside the U.S. and Canada.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities consider producing a Remote Communities Kit and Workbook.
- The committee suggested that the trustees’ Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment and Accessibilities review literature and service material to determine if experience related to carrying the message for underserved and remote communities is included.
- The committee reviewed the summary of sharing from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing from the trustees’ committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community /Treatment and Accessibilities and suggested the following:

- Continue exploring ways to meet the needs of A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
- Request shared experience from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing regarding the types of technology used for participation in A.A.
- Review the A.A. website to determine if it is accessible to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.
- Request shared experience from groups about the ways they are lowering access barriers in carrying the message to A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and include sharing in existing literature and service material.
- Suggest the AA Grapevine develop a book that includes shared experience from A.A. members who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and are overcoming access barriers.
- The committee suggested that a service piece be developed to help new committee chairs in getting started in Treatment and Accessibilities service.

Trustees

Committee Considerations:

- The committee reviewed the resumes and approved, as eligible for election, all Class B trustee candidates for Eastern Canada regional trustee and Pacific regional trustee.
- The committee thoughtfully reviewed a proposal to censure the General Service Board and after seeking extensive additional input from the general manager of G.S.O., the chair of the General Service Board, and additional General Service Board trustees, agreed to take no action. The committee recognized that the litigation regarding the Printer's Copy Manuscript at Alcoholics Anonymous has caused many in the Fellowship to have strong feelings on all sides of this issue. The committee believes that the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most important treasure we have as a Fellowship. The committee also recognizes that the General Service Board and the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Board have many legal responsibilities and must sometimes make use of the right of decision, but in the spirit of A.A. unity, the committee asks the General Service Board, A.A. World Services, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc. that:
 - All major decisions made by A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc., the General Service Office or AA Grapevine management be promptly and fully reported to the General Service Board, as appropriate.

- If the General Service Board, the A.A. World Services or AA Grapevine boards need to initiate a legal proceeding as a plaintiff, that whenever possible, they will consult the members of the General Service Conference before starting such a proceeding, being ever mindful of A.A. unity and A.A.'s financial prudence. However, the committee understands that sometimes this might not be possible.
- The committee recognizes that the General Service Board, A.A. World Services Inc., and AA Grapevine, Inc. could be brought into litigation by other parties and in no way wants to limit their actions required to protect these corporations.
- The committee reviewed a proposal to reorganize the A.A.W.S. and General Service Boards and took no action. The committee noted that although a reorganization was not considered necessary at this time, the committee requested that the trustees' Committee on Nominating develop procedures for a partial or complete reorganization of the General Service Board, the A.A.W.S. or AA Grapevine boards and that a report be brought back to the 2019 Conference Committee on Trustees, including all possible options.
- The committee expressed their appreciation for the report on the regional geographic service structure from the trustees' Committee on Nominating and the suggestion that the General Service Board discuss a possible survey of past and current regional trustees regarding their workload and ability to fulfill all their responsibilities. The committee expressed their hope that every option will be considered to allow as many A.A. members as possible the opportunity to serve on the General Service Board.

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