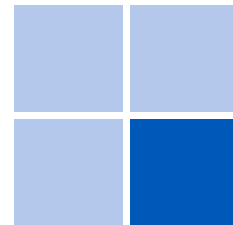


Quarterly Report from G.S.O.



Activities of the General Service Board Including A.A. World Services, Inc., AA Grapevine, Inc.

This is a confidential bulletin, for use only within A.A.

November 2022

General Service Board Meeting

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., held its quarterly meeting at the Brooklyn Marriott Hotel on Monday, October 31, 2022. Linda Chezem, Chair of the General Service Board, presided. All committees met during the weekend. Highlights of committee reports appear below:

Archives

The committee reviewed the section “Conducting Interviews of A.A. members in American Sign Language (ASL)” in the draft “Archives Guidelines for Conducting Oral Histories.” Following a thorough and wide-ranging discussion, the committee agreed to incorporate the suggestion of using a Certified Deaf Interpreter to copy or “mirror” the testimonies in ASL so that the anonymity of A.A. members is maintained.

Conference

The 2022 Subcommittee on Conference Improvements is developing an “Illness and Injury Contingency Plan” for the General Service Conference and is exploring voting options that will allow a Conference Member to continue participation during the Conference week if they are physically unable to attend the Conference sessions.

Online groups participation workshop: The committee acknowledged the value of a Conference workshop to engage a broad range of perspectives on the topic of Online Groups Participation. The committee included time for a potential workshop during the Friday afternoon session in its draft of the Conference Week Schedule.

Cooperation with the Professional Community

Interviews have begun with members of a focus group of professionals who work in the field of mental health to explore more effective ways to communicate about A.A. The committee agreed to forward the final draft of the pamphlet, “A.A. in Your Community” to the 2023 Conference Committee on C.P.C.

Corrections

The committee reviewed a service piece to be included in the Corrections Workbook on sponsorship of persons in custody and forwarded comments and edits for consideration.

The Canadian Corrections Working Group chair gave an update on their work to increase awareness of and participation in the Corrections Correspondence Service in Canada and to discuss digital literature.

Finance

GSO Financial Results

The Trustees Finance and Budgetary committee reviewed the GSO unaudited financial results for the nine months ended September 30, 2022.

September marked the fourth consecutive month of gross literature sales in excess of \$1 million, a milestone not reached for several years. However, because supply chain disruptions throughout the worldwide paper and printing industries continue to unfavorably impact the manufacturing cost of A.A.W.S. literature, gross margin improved only slightly. Gross margin for September is \$720,059, which is \$167,035 more than August even though September gross sales were \$45,887 less than August. Year-to-date gross margin is \$4,290,153, which is 80 percent of the reforecast budget of \$5,390,000 and \$762,159 less than last year. Cost of goods sold so far this year is \$4,892,060 which is 91 percent of the reforecast budget and \$1,406,513 more than last year.

Contributions for September are \$667,544, a decrease of \$168,105 from August and \$69,189 less than September 2021. Year-to-date contributions are \$7,386,529. This represents 67 percent of the reforecast budget of \$11,000,000 (with 75 percent of the year elapsed) and is \$30,118 less than last year. Year to date, 23 percent of contributions have been received online. On average, a contribution made online costs \$2.67 less to process than a contribution made by check. The committee expressed its gratitude to the Fellowship for its continuing Seventh Tradition support.

Year-to-date payroll and benefits expense is \$6,890,148 which is 70 percent of the reforecast budget amount of \$9,849,446 and \$88,827 less than last year. The variance to budget is due to employee turnover. Year-to-date professional fees expense is \$1,079,703, which is only 58 percent of the reforecast budget and is \$470,349 less than last year. The variance to budget is due to the timing of projects such as sign language videos and technology projects.

Year-to-date travel and meetings expense is \$1,540,100, which is 89 percent of the reforecast budget and \$1,467,463 more than last year. The variance to last year is due to the General Service Conference, regional forums, and Board meetings returning to in-person meetings. Total operating expense year to date is \$12,638,367 which is 72 percent of the reforecast budget amount of \$17,569,432 and \$1,094,808 more than last year. The increase is due to the increased travel

and meetings expense offset by professional fees being less than last year.

An operating surplus of \$177,178 was realized in September. The operating deficit year to date is \$545,496 compared with a reforecast budget operating deficit of \$855,032 and an operating surplus of \$1,166,815 at this time last year. Including non-operating revenue and expense, the year-to-date deficit is \$2,587,423 compared with a reforecast total deficit of \$1,377,099 and a total surplus of \$1,448,089 at this time last year. The major non-operating expense is a year-to-date \$1,823,025 decline in market value (non-cash expense) of the post-retirement medical fund. The GSO financial report was accepted by the committee.

Grapevine Financial Results

The committee reviewed the unaudited results for the period ending September 30, 2022. Average paid circulation of the Grapevine magazine was 52,720. This compared with a budget of 52,994 and 2021 actual of 57,250.

Total Gross Margin for the first nine months was \$1,114,377 which is \$44,609 less than budgeted and \$141,026 less than the \$1,255,404 achieved in 2021. Total costs and expenses of the magazine were \$1,406,999, which were \$36,727 less than budgeted and \$194,991 less than the \$1,212,008 in 2021. After adding interest earned, there was a net loss for the period of \$282,122 compared with a budgeted net loss of \$274,240. The Grapevine financial report was accepted by the committee.

La Viña Financial Results

The committee reviewed the unaudited results for the period ending September 30, 2022. Average paid subscriptions for La Viña were 6,658 compared with 6,361 budgeted and 6,298 in September 2021.

Total Gross Margin of the magazine was \$58,210 compared with a budget of \$31,375. After deducting the costs and expenses of \$493,934, a shortfall between revenue and expenses of \$435,724 resulted for this service activity. This compares with a budget shortfall of \$401,539 and a shortfall of \$260,021 for 2021. The shortfall for the La Viña service activity has been funded by a transfer from the General Fund of the GSB. The La Viña financial report was accepted by the committee.

Reserve Fund

As of September 30, 2022, the Reserve Fund balance net of Grapevine subscription liability is \$12,919,536, which represents 7.78 months of expenses based on the reforecast budget expenses for GSO and Grapevine.

Reserve Fund Policy

Kevin Prior, GSB treasurer, reported to the committee on the status of the reserve fund policy project. After a lengthy discussion the committee amended the policy to include collaboration with the AAWS and Grapevine boards on decisions pertaining to a Reserve Fund balance in excess of 12 months of operating expenses. The Trustees Finance & Budgetary Committee recommended to the General Service Board to adopt the Reserve Fund of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Statement of Investment Policy.

AAWS report on self-support

Cathi C., AAWS treasurer, updated the committee on the activities of the Self-Support subcommittee. The subcommittee reviewed another story from GSO staff on a real-life example of how group and member contributions are used to carry the message and discussed additional ways to collect and share these stories. Suggested revisions to the draft flyer on contributions (SMF-203) were discussed and a new draft incorporating the changes was created. A Box 4-5-9 article on the importance of self-support is planned for the winter edition. Three members of the subcommittee were interviewed and one of the stories collected from GSO staff was submitted for the article.

General Sharing Session

General Service trustee Josh E. welcomed everyone to the General Sharing Session at the General Service Board Weekend. The topic was “Trust.”

Josh highlighted how Concept 3 says that “Our entire A.A. program rests upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore, we trust our leaders in world service. The “Right of Decision” that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.” Josh shared that to get to a place to be on the same team, there is an immense amount of vulnerability needed to be open to forgiving. In our work, it is a requirement of this service, as it says in the literature, “We are people who normally would not mix.” I do not have to like you, but I have to love and respect you, with the spirit of being open, honest, vulnerable, and exposed. Instead of criticizing and critiquing, displaying contempt or a lack of respect, rolling eyes, defensiveness, not being able to receive, being reactive, or stonewalling. You cannot connect if your decision is not to talk about it anymore, and putting off an answer is not a way to find trust. I believe in my heart that even the most challenging of people, even when it is myself, can find love and forgiveness, he said. Josh then opened the session for sharing.

A class A trustee shared how there are high-trust and low-trust organizations. Our natural inclination is to be trusting; in low-trust organizations there is bureaucracy, rules, pyramid, the pressure that someone’s watching, and we must work twice as hard. High trust pays dividends, it means less stress, more engagement, is collaborative and productive. We can take an honest look in the mirror to appreciate how we can continue to grow towards supporting one another.

An employee shared how the ability to recover and have a spiritual experience can see its reflection in the speed of the trust a newcomer is able to access in the beginning of the program. “I find often that I have to keep re-surrendering — what obstacles are there from trusting AA?”

Another employee expressed his thoughts on starting his job at GSO. “It’s been the one-on-one support in the different roles that’s helped to start building trust...For example, with the prospect of the location of the office moving, it is scary for a person that works here, but we must trust the committee process.”

An employee shared how “The family I grew up in, was

alcoholic, there was no trust, and it was very scary. But when you come [to GSO], everything is reviewed, you are taught in a nurturing environment; I'd never had that, it's beautiful, we are always learning."

Another employee shared: "When my first son was born, my wife had had a c-section, so they just handed him to me for an hour. I felt so trusted, I was being trusted with this life, not just then but for years! Before getting sober, you couldn't trust me, and now here I was trusted with a new life, now two boys, now men. Trust is a gift, such as that given to me when I was hired to work [at GSO], and I am grateful to you for that."

A Grapevine employee introduced himself in a typical AA fashion, saying his name and, "I have trust issues." [Long pause and laughter] "And they go way back to early childhood, an alcoholic father, an angry mother, that kind of stuff, being sent off to parochial school with harsh and abusive teachers, not being able to concentrate on schoolwork, getting in trouble. I grew up very scared and very angry; very hurt. When I found alcohol, that took away a lot of those problems. I failed out of school, partly since there was a bar down the street."

"Somewhere along the line, for a variety of reasons, I was able to get into AA, life was so horrible that I had to, and I turned my life around."

A Regional Trustee shared how "Out of everything I trust, I trust AA, the principles, our primary purpose, the Traditions, the Concepts, my recovery, so that I can be in a good space. Being trustworthy, doing what I say I'm going to do. When I don't feel I'm good enough, I am reminded by my sponsor that I am right where I'm meant to be. God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called."

A Trustee shared: "When I came in, I got my feelings hurt a lot. My sponsor said, 'Make an excuse for them,' so before I worked the steps, I made excuses for you all. Charitable assumptions sound so much cuter. Everybody is broken, my sponsor would say, just try not to dig in where they are broken." She then shared her excitement in seeing all the proposed agenda items which she referred to as "love notes." She explained that how she saw it was that through these submissions, people engaged in the structure, and gave an opinion, "I was excited by all these people, this attracts all of those that don't normally participate."

A regional trustee shared his experience of seeing a psychologist when he was still drinking. "He asked me a series of questions, seemingly innocuous, where he would start the sentence and I would finish it, so there was a couple I answered about my favorite sports team, and what I would buy at a store and such. Simple enough. Then he asked me "I'd rather die than..." and I answered immediately, "ask for help." Trust is implicit in my recovery in the faith that help will be there, like when my name came out of the hat for regional trustee, and it meant that I had to go deeper.

A trustee wrapped up the sharing portion, "As a member of the board, it's like waiting for the lightning bolt of mistrust, matched with having to be an alcoholic, so we can be hypersensitive. I am a person who is hit by lightning bolts of misperception. A daily program is so important. I really wish I didn't have to deal with lightning bolts, but it's part of the job." She continued, "I left our last Conference not thinking in any way

that the unrest was resolved, I left thinking, unity is not a function of the answer, unity is a function of the discussion, through the process of reporting, accountability, having conversations." She concluded by highlighting the importance of welcoming those conversations at all levels, for any questions or concerns, because maybe there's an idea that needs to be heard, or a misconception that can be clarified. "This has been a really hard year. I will continue to trudge, and to serve the best that I can. I have no ill intent—I am not a fighter, though I have opinions. But I believe that the group conscience, whatever comes out, is bigger and better, richer, and deeper, and so much more colorful than anything that came before. It involves the people it should involve, as we respectfully engage in those conversations."

Josh closed the session by thanking the participants for their courage. "We are all people, and when we feel safe, we can do better work. It was a pleasure to get to know some of you better, I am grateful for the conversations we may continue to have."

International

The committee accepted a report on the online 27th World Service Meeting (WSM) from our delegates to the WSM, as well as sharing from the WSM coordinator, Publishing director, and General Manager. The committee appreciated the vast connection and learning that was gained from this global online meeting and looks forward to ongoing discussions relating to post World Service Meeting activity and topics related to the planning of the 28th WSM, which will be held in New York in 2024.

International Convention/Regional Forums

The committee had a robust discussion about the pros and cons of holding hybrid regional forums and reviewed a bid proposal to provide technology services for interactive, online, real-time access to in-person Regional Forums. The committee voted to continue in-person-only regional forums but agreed that it may be useful to revisit the subject in a year.

Regarding options for closing the Big Meetings at the International Convention, the committee reviewed and approved the survey as submitted. The committee requested that the survey be launched on November 15 with a December 15 deadline.

Literature

This assignment is providing support, as needed, to six subcommittees of the trustees' Literature Committee. In addition, work continues the projects to create a draft for the Fifth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the Fourth Edition of the book *Alcohólicos Anónimos* in Spanish as well as the update of the pamphlets "A.A. for the Black and African American Alcoholic," "A.A. for the Native North American," and "Do You Think You're Different?" Also, following up with *Additional Considerations* from the 2022 General Service Conference the desk is working along with Publishing department on the revisions of a draft of the Literature Committee workbook. Stay tuned for the winter issue of *Box 4-5-9*, which will feature many other exciting news and notes from G.S.O.

Nominating

Two subcommittees continue their work. The Trustee Emeriti subcommittee is creating guidelines for selection, term, and responsibilities of emeriti. The Class A Recruitment subcommittee strives to strengthen methods and create tools to build a strong pool of candidates. The committee recommended to the General Service Board that Reilly K. serve two years as Trustee Director on A.A. World Services, Inc., to succeed Irma V.; and that Joyce S., serve for two years on the AA Grapevine Inc., to succeed Mike L., with both assignments to take place following the April 2023 General Service Conference.

Public Information

The committee discussed three proposed agenda items related to the use of QR codes and took no action for forward them to Conference. The committee discussed that use of QR codes on materials is occurring on various projects at GSO. The ability to determine when to incorporate QR coding into materials should remain within the purview of the office. The committee discussed the third quarter AAWs YouTube Channel report. Key analytics regarding how people are finding our channel through online searches were outlined. Analytics indicate that people are not watching our entire videos because our content is older and lengthy. The committee reviewed the 2022 A.A. Membership Survey process report detailing the actions taken by the PI Assignment to ensure a sound survey. Every A.A. Membership Survey has been a current snapshot of a limited number of the total A.A. group population, based on a moment in time.

Treatment and Accessibilities

The committee reviewed the progress report on military audio interviews project. The focus of the project is on active-duty members, and they are interviewing a total of 50 members, 40 from U.S. and 10 from Canada, representing a diverse cross-section of those who serve in different branches of the military, have different ranks, and genders. The committee reviewed one sample audio recording and gave the consultants and staff positive feedback that they were quite powerful and a great example of how to move forward with the remaining interviews. The committee agreed to renew the term of the consultants work for another year, starting in January 2023.

The committee agreed to forward to the 2023 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities the proposed agenda item to “Consider request to do an organization-wide “Accessibilities Inventory” of Alcoholics Anonymous throughout its services and structure evaluate what is found to communicate and improve how we function. Also, that an action plan for improvement to be made from the information gathered.

The committee discussed the proposed agenda item “Consider the development of pamphlet directed to the alcoholic with learning disabilities, social disorders, developmental disabilities, and cognitive disorders,” and took no action. The committee instead agreed to forward a discussion topic to the 2023 Conference Committee on Treatment and Accessibilities to discuss the best methods for the Fellowship to reach the al-

coholic with learning disabilities, social disorders, developmental disabilities, and cognitive disorders.

A.A. World Services

Since its July 2022 meeting, the A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.) Corporate Board has met five times: August 11 (Interim A.A.W.S. Board), September 9 (A.A.W.S. Strategic Planning), September 23 (Interim A.A.W.S. Executive Session), October 13 (A.A.W.S. Budgeting), October 18 (A.A.W.S. Budgeting).

Administration

On October 5, the General Service Office reopened with 46 visitors, several of whom were international guests. As of September 12, each department is now back at the office three days a week or more.

We have been busy with department reorganization. Beverly Jones-King, our new Executive Legal Administrator, is the point person for all legal matters and is designing written workflows and procedures for contracts, licensing, intellectual property (IP) and copyrights. Our licensing administrators, originally in Publishing, are now reporting to Beverly Jones-King on the 11th floor. Stephanie Bozino-Routier joined us as our Language Services manager, and will project manage all document translations at G.S.O. We are in the final stages of recruiting for in-house Spanish and French translators. With this department coming into place, we expect to have all the background identified and translated from the General Service Conference in time for the January 2023 board weekend. Progress continues on the implementation and development of translation and licensing software tools within our ERP system. To better manage the volume of license requests from around the world, we have created a new email address tl@aa.org.

Archives

The Archives Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plan, revised in September 2022, is currently under review with the Internal Audit Committee. Once finalized a copy will be distributed to Archives Staff as well as primary and secondary contacts. As of October 2022, digitizing Bill’s correspondence with members on subject matters is now complete with a digital count of 14.22GB.

Communications

The Communications department has been busy with several initiatives including the release of the Meeting Guide app version 4.0 this September; the conversion of Universal Analytics to GA4 and, with guidance from the Grapevine podcast team, PI and Publishing continued development of G.S.O podcast. The department has assumed responsibility for all Newsletters to bring more consistency with style guidelines and messaging. These include *Box 4-5-9* and *About A.A.*

Human Resources

The new HR Director has been busy with a variety of initiatives: creating hybrid workplace guidelines for scheduling and communication; creating a Member Services training deck; coaching managers on employee relations and feedback; and implement Day One Orientation with all new employees followed by a 90-day check-in. In September, the office had

the first in-person event since the pandemic with a joyful ice cream party called “What’s the Scoop?” to introduce new staff for 2022. This was followed by an office-wide Halloween costume contest and a series of activities to celebrate Gratitude Week in November.

Operations

The Fellowship Connection training video for Area Registrars is now complete with French and Spanish video dubbing expected in 2023. From July 16, 2022, to October 14, 2022, the Member Services team received and responded to approximately 6,659 email inquiries. A total of 2,412 phone calls were also received; 1,220 were routed from the Front Desk and 1,192 were direct calls to the Member Services line. The Receptionist received 4,459 phone calls from July 16 to October 14. The Member Services team executed 1,400 District/Area/Group updates in NetSuite and Area Registrars performed 1,795 updates via Fellowship Connection. The team also reviewed and processed 7,909 literature orders during this time period.

The Mail and Shipping team of two managed 9,184 pieces of incoming mail and 2,975 pieces of outgoing mail from July 16, 2022, through October 14, 2022. Remote physical inventory will be conducted at the Kansas City warehouse the week of December 5.

Technology Services

In October the Technology Services team worked with vendor KnowBe4 to launch a month-long cybersecurity awareness program. The team is leading a comprehensive redesign of the contributions site with input from Staff Services, the Finance Department, and AAWS directors. Technology Services is working with the Operations Department to identify process changes that will allow the warehouse control commitment of the inventory in our ERP platform.

Services Summary

Conference

The Conference assignment received and processed 184 Proposed Agenda Items before the September 15 deadline and supported trustee meetings related to the Equitable Distribution of Workload and Conference Improvements. Diana L. has implemented thoughtful innovations and clarity to the assignment including holding “office hours” with Conference committee secretaries and reviewing software for assigning the Panel 73 delegates to their respective Conference committees.

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Treatment

Consideration continues to develop service material to help A.A. members speak with their healthcare providers about A.A. and proposed literature for mental health professionals. There is continued work on potential posts for the LinkedIn project. The Fall 2022 issue of About A.A. was distributed on October 11.

Corrections

The Corrections desk put out a Call to Action for all trusted servants in Canada to increase the awareness and partici-

pation of the Corrections Correspondence Service in Canada among members who are in custody. We have a waitlist for members on the outside ready to be of service.

Group Services

The desk reached out to several areas affected by natural disasters including Puerto Rico, Florida, and Nova Scotia. The October Quarterly IGCO meeting addressed a number of topics: status of backorders, positive feedback around the mixed title discount and possible price increases, quick order testing and the ability to participate more fully in project development, and a request from the Communications Committee to have an identified Meeting Guide app contact.

Literature

We are excited to support the outreach efforts of the new appointed committee member (ACM) who is coordinating the working group the “A.A. for the Native North American Alcoholic” pamphlet update as well as the efforts of a new subcommittee for the “Do You Think You Are Different” pamphlet update.

Nominating

The assignment is processing nominee information in preparation to elect the Trustee-At-Large, Canada, and the Northeast and Southwest regional trustees at the 73rd General Service Conference. There are no vacancies to fill next year for Class A trustees.

Public Information

Submissions of video content created by young people on how they carry the message to other young people who may benefit from our life-giving solution are being received and will be reviewed by the Conference Committee.

Regional Forums

There were 541 attendees (335 first time participants) at the September Pacific Regional Forum. The fourth and final 2022 forum, the Southeast Regional Forum, was held December 2-4 in New Orleans.

Board Committees

Finance: For details on AAWS Finance, see the report of the trustees’ Finance Committee starting on page 1. Work on the 2023 budget will continue at the December AAWS Board meeting. The Board approved the following recommendation brought by the AAWS Finance committee: That the AAWS Board deposit \$19,821 into the International Literature Fund bank account.

Publishing: The new jacket-less Big Book and “Twelve and Twelve” are being printed with expected ship dates in December. This design change will help circumvent supply chain back orders and reduce printing costs.

Technology/Communication Services (TCS): The Thread-based Forum Subcommittee was dissolved with any further communication deferred to the Communications department. The work of the committee is reflected in a number of recommendations and forwarding actions, with a focus on privacy policies and analytics.

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

- That the 2022 third quarter Podcast report, the 2022 third quarter website report, the 2022 third quarter Meeting Guide App report, the 2022 third quarter YouTube report, and the 2022 third quarter Google Ads report be forwarded by A.A.W.S. to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- That the A.A.W.S. Board accept the revised A.A.W.S. Board Technology/Communication/Services Committee Composition, Scope and Procedure; the revised A.A.W.S. Inc. Policy on G.S.O.'s A.A. Website; the revised Meeting Guide Privacy Policy, the revised A.A.W.S., Inc. Policy on Posting YouTube Videos, and the revised Privacy Policy, currently used for aa.org and the online bookstore.

Internal Audit Committee (IAC): The IAC has reviewed Conflict of Interest forms for the AAWS Board members and GSO staff to identify who is completing the forms and for consistency in form execution. In accordance with Article 4 of the AAWS by-laws, it was decided that the annual report should track Board Officer changes, with this information to be updated by the Nominating Committee. A policy was requested to ensure secure information in personnel folders. The board approved the following recommendations from the Internal Audit committee:

- That the A.A.W.S. Board review and approve the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services and General Service Board Policy and Procedures — Finance. And that the A.A.W.S. Board send the approved Alcoholics Anonymous World Services and General Service Board Policy and Procedures — Finance to the General Service Board for review and approval.

Nominating: In addition to fulfilling responsibilities related to regional trustee candidate selections, the committee shared an updated Nominating Composition, Scope, and Procedure for review. The board approved the following recommendation from the Nominating committee: That an updated A.A.W.S. Nominating Committee Composition, Scope, and Procedure be forwarded to Trustees Nominating Committee for further review.

Ad-hoc Committee on Service Material: The committee reviewed their findings on the history of Service Material, how Service Material is defined and produced, and how it is revised. The A.A.W.S. board thanked the committee for its work and created a new working group to continue refining the recommendations drafted by the ad-hoc committee.

Strategic Planning:

The AAWS board has participated in Strategic Planning several times throughout 2022, with the following emerging areas of focus:

1. *Develop People and Culture* — Provide an effective, productive, and positive work environment consistent with the mission of A.A. and our spiritual principles while working toward the well-being and safety of staff in their support of the Fellowship.
2. *Improving Communications* — Deliver an effective integrat-

ed communication strategy to engage the fellowship, boards, and staff with demonstrated improvement in listening and responsiveness.

3. *Governance* — Bring clarity regarding effective roles and responsibilities of the trustee members and directors of our AAWS, Grapevine, and General Service Boards, their committees, and the staff and employees supporting these for our Fellowship.

In September, the Strategic Planning Committee focused on actionable items, including ways to improve the budgeting process. This work is organic, evolving with each planning session. The AAWS Board will continue its discussion of the next steps at its December 2022 Strategic Planning meeting.

The Board also discussed Working Groups and how the roles and responsibilities should be defined in their Composition, Scope, and Procedure documents. Further discussion will take place in the Trustees' Nominating Committee.

The Conference desk forwarded 16 Proposed Agenda Items (PAIs) for review by the A.A.W.S. board. A robust and thoughtful discussion ensued with board actions recorded for submission to the Conference desk for next steps.

PAI #09 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to change the word “donation” and “contribution” in the 12 Concepts Illustrated under Warranty One and took no action, noting that implementing the proposed changes is within the scope of the A.A.W.S. publication policy. The request will be forwarded to the Publications Department.

PAI #47 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to incorporate the Open Meeting Statement in “The AA Group” pamphlet and took no action, noting that this topic was considered in 2019 by the 69th General Service Conference and was not carried forward.

PAI #48 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to address the wording on the front cover flap of the 4th Edition of the Big Book and took no action, noting that this request is under purview of the Publishing Department. The committee agreed to forward a memo to the Publishing Department for comment regarding future printings.

PAI #46 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to have any new or updated service material be sent to the appropriate conference committee for review and took no action, noting that processes related to service material are currently being studied by the A.A.W.S. board.

PAI #50 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to implement an automatic review of the appearance and content of pamphlets every five years and took no action, noting that this process already exists within the trustees Literature Committee.

PAI #127 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to improve internal communication and service to the groups by simplifying the processes and procedures for registration and updating information and took no action, noting that a) Databases maintained by Intergroups and Central Offices and not accessible to the General Service Office, and b) The Fellowship Connection portal is a resource tool available to all area registrars.

PAI #174 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to create a distinction between meetings that are unaffiliated with any groups in Fellowship Connection and took no action, noting that the General Service Office is solely responsible for maintaining a list of groups within the US/CAN service structure, and collaborates with Intergroups and Central Offices at a local level to make their meeting lists available to the Fellowship at large through the Meeting Guide App.

PAI #145 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to create a poster-sized service piece entitled “Is Our Group Conscience just AA...or Politics?” and took no action, noting that there is no widely expressed need at this time for such a service piece.

PAI #33 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to redesign the aa.org website with European Union GDPR standards and took no action, noting that there is ongoing review and oversight of this by the Technology/Communication/Service Committee.

PAI #38 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to conduct a cost analysis for translation of the 4th edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* into American Sign Language and took no action, noting this is within the purview of A.A.W.S. and will be forwarded to the Publishing Department for a cost analysis.

PAI #77 The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to shuffle the Daily Reflections pages and will forward this item to trustees’ Literature Committee.

PAI #115 — The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item for the General Service Office to provide a summary of staff changes to the Fellowship and reviewed this item with appreciation. An informed response letter will be sent to the submitter.

PAI #16 — The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to reinsert the “Diversity and Inclusion” section to the *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare* service material and agreed to forward this item to a conference committee for discussion. An informed response letter will be sent to the submitter.

PAI #19 — The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to replace the 2022 version of the *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare* service material with the 2021 version and agreed to forward this item to a conference committee for discussion. An informed response letter will be sent to the submitter.

PAI #36 — The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item that the *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare* service material use wording from the 2021 version on race and gender and agreed to forward this item to a conference committee for discussion. An informed response letter will be sent to the submitter.

PAI #75 — The A.A.W.S. Board discussed the proposed agenda item to replace the 2022 version of the *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare* service material with the 2021 version and agreed to forward this item to a conference committee for discussion. An informed response letter will be sent to the submitter.

AA Grapevine

Since the quarterly meeting on July 28, 2022, the A.A. Grapevine Board of Directors met in New York for a Planning/Strategic Planning meeting on September 9 and a full day of Strategic Planning on September 10. The board met again on October 28 and in executive session on October 28.

The following committees met virtually: Nominating and Governance met on August 27 and October 11; Finance and Budget met September 27 and October 6; Strategic Planning met September 9, 10, 23, 30, October 7 and 21.

Strategic Planning Meeting: That weekend saw a review of many years of plans and planning as well as an honest appraisal of successes, challenges, obstacles, and failures over the many years we have been working towards a digital transformation. Since that weekend, the subcommittee members have been actively working with management on the development of RFPs, schedules, staffing, and logistics to create a new customized Grapevine App, while simultaneously reworking the structure of how we engage with the Fellowship directly through our existing trusted servants and targeting those outside of the service structure.

Overview

We have started work on Grapevine and La Viña apps, researching distribution channel logistics and costs. We continue to receive feedback from the Fellowship regarding features they would like to see on the app. Once we have integrated the store, magazines, and archives for both websites under Drupel 9, we plan to begin development of comprehensive smartphone apps for both magazines. The apps will include the current magazine, all archived stories, access to the podcast, daily quote, sobriety calculator, meeting guide, and the store. Subscribers will be able to personalize the app so it provides a daily sobriety checklist and a morning pop-up that tells the user their day count and their favorite meeting of the day. The apps will allow for extra audio, video and written content and we are researching ways to allow the fellowship opportunities for greater engagement with Grapevine and La Viña, and with one another. We have developed a five-year business plan, and we are currently seeking a freelance app project manager. This plan will require additional staff phased in during implementation to manage the app content.

While we have seen a decline in print subscriptions, we have enjoyed an increase in “Other Publishing Items.” We recently marked the one-year anniversary of the podcast in October and reached a milestone, surpassing a quarter million downloads! Instagram accounts continue to increase (GV has 8,491 followers and LV has 1029).

Board Meetings

During its September 9, 2022 planning meeting, the board agreed to meet virtually for the December 10, 2022 planning meeting and agreed to forward the July 2022 financial statements back to AAGV Finance Committee for analysis. During its October 28, 2022 meeting, the Board approved the 990 tax return and accepted Marks, Paneth as the AA Grapevine, Inc., auditor in 2023.

The board received activity reports from office operations, Grapevine and La Viña editorial, production, website, and customer relations.

Price increase to start on January 1, 2023. Price increase notice went out on August 29, 2022.

- Posted on AAGV and AAWS website
- Eblast to our entire Constant Contact list(s)
- Meeting Guide App
- Instagram
- Also, the notice will appear in the next few issues of GV and LV News

Board Committee Activity

Finance and Budget: The Treasurer reported the committee had met on September 27 and took a deeper dive into the July financial report. In addition, the committee added and changed accounting language on the report. The committee met again on October 6 to review and approve September 27 changes.

Nominating and Governance: The committee met on August 27, 2022 and forwarded the name of a candidate to Trustees' Nominating Committee for a Regional Trustee assigned to the AAGV Board. The committee met on October 11 to discuss Section 7, Article II of the AAGV, Inc. Bylaws for possible alteration/removal. The committee was asked to review this item and compare to AAWS and GSB Bylaws for consistency and will meet again for final decisions. Any adjustment to the proxy provision will also affect Article XI.

Strategic Planning: The chair reported he has been meeting regularly with the committee

on developing the goals identified by the Board at its September planning weekend.

Circulation, Development and Customer Service — Highlights

Customer relations team is developing customer service guidelines for new fulfillment vendor.

February and March issues will roll out with the free book offer "Best of Bill" on the cards; testing of holiday subscription offers went out to store buyers and active subscribers in early September; *Free On the Inside* sales as of Aug. 26: Online Store: 5,264; Ingram: 361; *Mujeres en AA* sales as of Aug. 26: Online Store: 3,718; Ingram: 1,185; *Prayer and Meditation* sales as of Aug. 26: Online Store: 11,312; Ingram: 6,207; *Fun in Sobriety* sales as of Aug. 26: Online Store: 4,252; Ingram: 1,842; *Sobriedad Emocional* sales as of Aug. 26: Online Store: 337; Ingram: N/A. Will send out to Grapevine, La Viña contact lists, service structure and reach deeper into fellowship through the Meeting Guide app; seeking freelance app project manager; working on 5-year business plan.

Editorial Advisory Board: The Grapevine Editorial Advisory Board met on August 24. La Viña Editorial Advisory Board rotation is underway. Freelance La Viña editor reviewing mem-

ber requirements. Recruitment of new members will follow.

Grapevine Editorial Report: The senior editor reported: *Home Group* book (revised with new cover and new virtual stories) due spring 2023 is on schedule; Podcast: working with hosts to connect with interview subjects from current stories in magazine and important information; Audio Project: Working with freelancer to develop more playlists; publishing more AA News and interviews with Class A & B Trustees and important AA announcements (working closely with GSO staff desks); GV Workbook *draft* being finalized for upload to website by January 1; International Convention notices began running in magazine in November issue; working with Publisher on book bundles for holiday free shipping.

La Viña Editorial Report: The senior editor reported: La Viña magazines currently in production and on schedule: January/February: Prayer and Meditation; March/April: Newcomers edition; La Viña informational workshops continue; La Viña Editorial Assistant attended the first XIIX National Hispanic Convention in Boston and the Pacific Regional Forum in Utah; La Viña freelance editor attended the first workshop for Hispanic Woman in Georgia.

Web Report: The Web Coordinator reported monthly web traffic in the 3rd quarter averaged 86,717 new visitors, 11,148 returning visitors and 331,839 page views. Upgrade to Drupal 9 to be completed in September.

General Service Conference: The AA Grapevine Board reviewed proposed agenda items and agreed to forward the following to the 2023 General Service Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña:

- Review A.A. Grapevine Workbook.
- Review progress report on Grapevine and La Viña Instagram accounts.
- Consider the list of suggested AA Grapevine book topics for 2024 or after.

Requests not forwarded:

PAI #15: Consider the translation of Grapevine books *Spiritual Awakenings* and *Young and Sober*, currently available in English only, into Spanish not later than 2025. *The board took no action. The Grapevine Board reviewed this request with great interest and decided to include these titles on the suggested book topics list for the 73rd Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña.*

Proposed Agenda Items related to the Preamble — PAIs # 8, 18, 20, 30, 52, 57, 59, 70, 74, 84, 86, 99, 116, 128, 134, 140, 150, 160, 164, 165, 176, and 180:

The Grapevine Board thoughtfully reviewed each request below regarding the Preamble and took no action. The 72nd General Service Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña reviewed and discussed this issue thoroughly in April 2022 and took no action. The Grapevine Chair and the 72nd Conference Committee on Grapevine and La Viña met in October 2022 and reviewed these proposed agenda items. It was determined there was no new information that required further discussion.