

Highlights From A.A.W.S.

July 28, 2016

The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, July 28, 2016, at the General Service Office, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY. Chair of the A.A.W.S. Board, Joe D. opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.

MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Greg T., reported on the following:

Co-location construction project – Bids are nearly complete for additional office construction on the 11th floor and to implement necessary corrections, allowing us to provide accurate estimates for presentation to the A.A.W.S. Board. A proposal for Phase 2 of construction will be forwarded to the trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee of the General Service Board for approval.

Information technology – The IT team is in the process of creating dashboards in-house to provide more functionality. Grapevine was added to the General Service Board dashboard and Internet, giving their board members access to Grapevine board minutes. The Conference dashboard was revised again to include Spanish and French documents on the main page.

Archives – The summer 2016 issue of *Markings* was recently mailed to subscribers. This edition marks the last regular publication of the e-newsletter in order to allocate Archives department resources more cost-effectively. In the future, *Box 4-5-9* will occasionally publish articles related to A.A. archives and history with information provided by G.S.O. Archives.

Human Resources – There has been a lot of activity in terms of interviews, new hires, retirements and internal moves. The position of publishing director was posted internally and externally and David Rosen, publishing and licensing manager, was selected to fill the position, starting on July 5. Sheila Coppin-Thom, staff assistant, retired as of August 1. The employee wellness program has started with good feedback from employees and will continue through the summer with health and wellness events such as exercise/yoga classes, smoothie day, health tips, and a walking club. The job descriptions review and update project for the comprehensive salary review and market survey has begun and all job descriptions have been updated and sent to department heads and supervisors for review.

Office Safety and Security – In response to concerns raised by the A.A.W.S. Board regarding the level of safety and security at G.S.O., A.A.W.S. and Grapevine representatives met with the Interchurch Center to review building policies and procedures and discuss A.A.W.S./Grapevine security needs and questions. Additionally, we have received a bid for an office entry system that can accommodate our current building-issued ID cards, and we will send out RFPs to reputable security consultants to request a security audit of the 11th floor.

General Manager's Travel:

July 18-20, 2016: G.M./G.S.O. staff attended Eastern Canada Regional Forum in Thunder Bay, ON.

STAFF REPORT

The Communication Services assignment is working with our Digital Media Manager to coordinate improvements to G.S.O.'s A.A. website. The video "A New Freedom" was shown at the Eastern Canada Regional Forum and a workshop on Corrections Correspondence in Canada was also coordinated for this Forum. The 2016 *Final Conference Report* will be distributed soon. G.S.O.'s "New Group Information

Form” is being updated on the Group Services assignment to include information for new groups on receiving the *Group Handbook* in hard copy or online. For the first time the *LIM* bulletin will be made available electronically as a PDF version. The P.I. assignment has sent the Annual Anonymity Letter to the media as well as the annual letter to audio professionals who record and distribute speakers at A.A. events. The letter to the media was emailed to 29,600 media professionals. The Spring 2016 issue of *About A.A.*, our newsletter for professionals, has been published with a focus on our long history of cooperation with treatment settings, featuring sharing from our Class A trustee Peter Luongo. A first draft of the revised “Special Needs/Accessibilities” workbook has been created.

TECHNOLOGY / COMMUNICATION / SERVICES

The committee reviewed the 2016 Second Quarter Report on G.S.O.’s A.A. Website Activities and **recommended** that it be forwarded to the trustees’ Committee on Public Information; the recommendation was approved. A report on G.S.O.’s A.A. website analytics from April 2016 through June 2016 was also reviewed, showing a decline in the number of visits between May 2016 and June 2016. Staff will gather more information on this. The committee reviewed a report from management on offering the option to receive service committee kits electronically, and reiterated the desire to provide kits electronically to those who want them. The committee reviewed an “Update from G.S.O. on Content Use Policy and Permissions” and requested that draft guidelines for determining what entities would be allowed to post PSAs on the website be developed for review.

PUBLISHING

Gross sales: June sales continue the positive trend that 2016 has shown to date, with actual gross sales at \$1,163,537, which is a \$48,350 (4.34%) positive variance against budget of \$1,115,187. For 2016 through the month of June, gross sales are above estimate: \$6,910,677 actual sales vs. estimate of \$6,556,608, which is a \$354,069 (5.42%) positive variance.

Web sales: Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for June 2016 stand at \$644,936, which accounts for about 63.27% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily Intergroup/Central Offices and other bulk orders) for June are \$482,009 and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$162,926.

Digital books: Total ebook gross sales for January – June 2016 stand at \$120,030 with 30,643 units distributed. The publishing department is actively working with the finance department to monitor the effects of ebook sales on print and overall book sales.

International licensing and translation: January – June 2016 saw a 176% uptick in international licenses issued, signed, and returned over the same period in 2015. The Big Book is available in 69 translations. There are 15 translations pending, including Navajo, Haitian Creole, Lao, and Thai.

The committee **recommended** that in order to move current inventory of the 75th Anniversary Commemorative Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, authority be given to G.S.O. for “specific time only” and/or “permanent” price reduction options. The recommendation was approved.

The committee discussed a request for literature credit submitted by G.S.O. Nicaragua and **recommended** that a \$10,000 line of credit for purchase of A.A. literature be approved and granted. The committee also **recommended** a review of the accounts receivable policy, with a report-back requested for September. The recommendations were approved.

The committee discussed pricing and, in keeping with the selling price of other DVDs, **recommended** that the video "A New Freedom" be priced at \$10.00. The recommendation was approved.

The committee **recommended** a revision to its Composition, Scope and Procedure to reflect that recommendations are reached in committee by "substantial unanimity" as opposed to majority vote. The recommendation was approved.

The copyright registration process for the Blue People graphic image has been completed.

FINANCE

The G.S.O. six-month unaudited financial report showed that net sales were \$345,580 (5.4%) ahead of budget, Contributions were \$257,236 (8%) ahead of budget, and total operating expenses were \$609,595 (7.3%) less than budget. Net profit for the six months was \$305,860 compared with a budgeted loss for the period of \$897,711.

It was noted that sales have eased off during July, however contributions continue at a good pace close to or ahead of budget for July. There were no Advisory Actions that required mid-year budget adjustments.

In anticipation of the 2017 budget the committee will be evaluating various discounts currently allowed to purchasers (20% discount on all non-book items and a 25% discount on overseas orders) as well as information concerning items that are sold below cost. This includes the impact on manufacturing cost of low volume Spanish and French literature when compared with the English version of products that are produced in larger quantities. Current policy is to sell items for the same price in all three languages of the Conference.

The committee **recommended** a revised Composition, Scope and Procedure with two points included concerning oversight of the budgeting and contracting process for International Conventions. The recommendation was approved.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Following a strategic planning meeting with the Grapevine Board, a Joint Committee will be made up of representatives from each Board and will be co-chaired by one member from each Board. The purpose of the Joint Committee will be to speed up communication and planning between the two Boards, with significant decisions to be discussed and ratified by the Boards, not the Joint Committee. Each Board will create a standing agenda item for updates from the Joint Committee.

It was **recommended** that a proposed subsidy to retirees' under 65 medical insurance policy be added. That amount will be up to \$650 per individual, per month, with a 10% built-in annual increase. The recommendation was approved.

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