

# Highlights from AAWS

October 27, 2023

*Meeting of the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Board of Directors  
The General Service Office*

*475 Riverside Drive - New York, N.Y. Friday, October 27, 2023*

## **BUSINESS OF THE BOARD**

### **AAWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Cathi C., AAWS Chairperson**

**Vera F., Reilly K., Deborah K., Clint M., Carolyn W., John W., Bob W., Racy J.**

#### *AAWS Nominating Committee*

##### **Highlights-**

The Nominating Committee has revised the 2023 calendar of events.

##### **Recommendations-**

The board unanimously approved the following recommendation presented by the Nominating Committee-

- The AAWS Nominating Committee recommended to the AAWS Board that Racy J. be appointed to the position of Vice President of AAWS, Inc.

#### *AAWS Internal Audit Committee*

- The Internal Audit Committee (IAC) recommended to the A.A.W.S. Board the revised Internal Audit Committee Composition, Scope, and Procedure be approved.
- The Internal Audit Committee (IAC) recommended to the A.A.W.S. Board to request by memo that the Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee explore the development of an Allocation of Functional Expense Policy.

#### *AAWS TCS Committee*

##### **Highlights-**

The TCS Committee works on various innovative ways to advance technology at GSO.

The TCS Committee achieved a great success with the successful launch of the OnBoard platform for the October AAWS Board Meeting. This long-awaited replacement to the "Dashboard" has surpassed expectations. The implementation process was seamless, thanks to a well-planned strategy. The new platform has already increased efficiency and brought invaluable benefits.

##### **Recommendations-**

The board unanimously approved the following recommendations presented by the TCS Committee-

- The TCS committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the Analytics Working Group Progress Report be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- The TCS committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the 2023 third quarter LinkedIn report be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community.

- The committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the Meeting Guide International Activity report be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' International Committee.
- The TCS committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the 2023 third quarter reports on Website, Meeting Guide App, YouTube, Google Ads, Online Business Listings, and Podcast be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- The TCS committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the 2023 draft plan for Instagram be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' Committee on Public Information.
- The TCS committee recommended to the AAWS Board that the Archives request progress report be forwarded by AAWS to the trustees' Committee on Archives.

### *AAWS Finance Committee*

**Revenue:** YTD contributions are \$6,559,954. This represents 99% of the budget of \$6,650,000 and is \$159,031 (2%) less than last year. Gross literature sales are \$9,997,774. This represents 99% of the budget of \$10,070,000 and is \$1,862,672 (23%) more than last year. The variance to budget is due to greater than expected sales in March in anticipation of the April 3 price increase and strong sales since. Literature gross margin is \$4,964,088 which is 99% of the budget of \$5,035,000 and \$1,393,994 (39%) more than last year. Cost of goods sold (COGS) of \$5,107,384 which is 51.1% of gross sales compared to a budget of 48.0% and 46.4% last year. After being flat for two months, COGS as a % of gross sales increased in August due to a large paper purchase.

**Expense:** Salary expense is \$5,314,725, which is 95% of the YTD budget of \$5,584,258 and \$423,105 (9%) more than last year. The variance to budget is due to open positions. The variance to last year is due to new positions in Legal, Licensing, and Intellectual Property and Language Services. Employee benefits expense is \$1,412,624 which is 105% of the budget of \$1,347,372 and \$176,036 (14%) more than last year. Professional fees expense is \$1,062,251 which is 93% of the budget of \$1,136,757 and is \$94,117 (10%) greater than last year. Travel and meetings expenses are \$1,817,735 which is 129% of the budget amount of \$1,409,171 and \$309,688 (21%) more than last year. The variance is in part because hotel expenses were greater than budgeted for both the January GSB weekend and the GSC. Total operating expense before depreciation is \$11,682,381 which is 101%

of the budget amount of \$11,556,549 and \$1,076,466 (10%) more than last year. The variance to budget is due to the variances in employee benefits, and travel and meetings expenses.

**Surplus/Deficit:** After depreciation, the operating deficit is \$500,416 which compares unfavorably to a budgeted deficit of \$347,883 but favorably to a deficit of \$722,674 last year. Including non-operating revenue and expense, the overall deficit is \$608,142 which compares favorably to a budgeted deficit of \$958,342 and a deficit of \$2,188,400 last year. The major non-operating revenue is a gain of \$669,642 in the market value of the postretirement medical plan assets. This is a non-cash transaction. Non-operating expenses are \$994,056. According to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, the \$500,000 transferred from the Reserve Fund to Grapevine for app development is an expense for the GSB as the owner of the Reserve Fund. The same \$500,000 is revenue for Grapevine, so the revenue and expense cancel out to zero on consolidated financial statements.

**Reserve Fund:** As of August 31, the assets in the reserve fund total \$13,135,226. After subtracting the \$573,012 Grapevine subscription liability, the reserve fund balance is \$12,562,214. This represents 7.26 months of 2023 budgeted G.S.O., Grapevine, and La Viña operating expenses of \$20,766,137. Depreciation is not included in operating expenses because depreciation is not a cash expense.

#### **Recommendations-**

The board unanimously approved the following recommendations presented by the Finance committee:

- The AAWS Finance Committee recommended to the AAWS Board the acceptance of the 2022 990 and forward it to the Trustees Finance Committee.
- The AAWS Finance Committee recommended to the AAWS Board to forward the matter of Home Group Online for further discussion and action if necessary.
- The A.A.W.S. Finance Committee recommended to the A.A.W.S. Board that the International Literature Fund activity report ending September 30, 2023, be forwarded to the trustees' International Committee
- The A.A.W.S. Finance committee recommended to the A.A.W.S. Board that the World Service Meeting Fund activity report ending September 30, 2023, be forwarded to the trustees' International Committee.

## AAWS Publishing Committee

### Highlights-

For a limited time only, the Publishing Department is sweeping out their warehouses and offering AAWS literature and other items at a very Special Discounted Offer and Reduced Prices! (Note: Some items are in limited quantities. While supplies last.)

### **PAI #64**

*Create a lampshade with the Six Warranties for display and recitation by the General Service Conference and Area Assemblies and Committee Meetings and that detailed study of the warranties occur regularly at all levels of A.A. Service.*

### Recommendation:

- Regarding PAI #64, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board take no action, as there is not a widely expressed need by the Fellowship for the creation of a “lampshade” with the Six Warranties.
- Regarding the submitters proposal that a “detailed study of the warranties occur regularly at all levels of A.A. service, the committee agreed that the study of A.A.’s program is an individual choice, and not within the scope of A.A.W.S. to determine.

### **PAI #73**

*That the General Services Office (G.S.O.) resume publication of the newsletter Archives (FF-151) - Markings (F-151).*

### Recommendation:

- Regarding PAI #73, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board take no action.  
-The committee agreed that since the cessation of the Archives newsletter, the board is utilizing multiple distribution points to reach and inform the Fellowship as it relates to archives (e.g., Box 4-5-9, the AAWS podcast, and the GV podcast).

### **PAI #95**

*We propose that video versions of the pamphlets “Circles of Love and Service” and “Inside A.A.” be developed and that an audio version of the pamphlet “The A.A. Group - Where it all begins” be developed.*

### Recommendation:

- Regarding PAI #95, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board take no action.  
-The committee discussed that not only would this be a costly duplication of currently available information, but also the trustees are currently evaluating under the Comprehensive Media Plan (CMP) how best to serve the Fellowship as it relates to ways to prioritize and utilize multimedia formats and platforms beyond the printed format, which would include ideas such as what was proposed by the submitter.

### **PAI #101**

*Motion to reintroduce and emphasize the specific definition of the A.A. message, as articulated in the jacket of the third edition, into all forthcoming editions of the Alcoholics Anonymous book.*

### Recommendation:

- Regarding PAI #101, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board forward this item to the Publishing Department for consideration.

### **Proposal (originally PAI #9)**

*Consider revising the pamphlet "Twelve Concepts Illustrated" under Warranty One by changing the use of the words "donation" and "contribution." To read as follows:*

*“So long as we refuse to take outside donations and limit contributions from individual members, "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense."*

### Recommendation:

- Regarding a proposal (originally PAI #9 submitted in 2022), the committee recommended that the AAWS board forward this item to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference, adding background regarding the 2006 Advisory Action as it relates to the terms “contribution” and “donation.”  
-The committee discussed that the original PAI submitted last year was considered by AAWS, and the pamphlet was revised as follows: “So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit contributions from individual members, "we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense" (in accordance with the 2006 Advisory Action recommended that: The word “donation” be replaced with the word “contribution” in A.A.W.S. literature as it comes up for reprint.)  
-However, the submitter believes that the wording should be as noted in the proposal. The committee agreed that it may be useful to forward this item to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference given the fact that sentiment within the Fellowship may have shifted since the 2006 Advisory Action.

### **Proposal**

*That the Publishing Department of Alcoholics Anonymous produce a large print stand-alone edition of the Twelve Concepts for World Service, similar to the current volume (BM-32) but in a print size similar to that used in the large print edition of the 2018-2020 A.A. Service Manual.*

### **Recommendation:**

Regarding a proposal to produce a large print stand-alone edition of the Twelve Concepts for World Service, the committee recommended that the AAWS board take no action, because there is not a widely expressed need at this time.

-It was noted that the Publishing department is currently evaluating the literature portfolio in order to prioritize large print items, so this item can be in the queue as discussions continues in this vein. *(It was also noted that the first edition of the revised Service Manual is currently being considered for revision and this suggestion can be folded into the discussions although it was noted that it may be unwieldy for this item given the current size is currently the same size as large print.)*

### **Proposal**

*If the hard cover format of the current Fourth Edition, and upcoming Fifth Edition, of the book Alcoholics Anonymous is to be published in a “jacketless” format, that the book have a plain blue cover with only necessary title information on the binding side.*

### **Recommendation:**

Regarding a proposal that the cover format of the current Fourth Edition, and upcoming Fifth Edition Big Book have a plain blue cover with only necessary title information on the binding side, as opposed to a “jacketless” format, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board take no action.

-The committee discussed and agreed that there has been a huge acceptance of the new format, with the office receiving very few – albeit vehement – complaints regarding the jacketless format. Additionally, it was discussed that some members who prefer not to use the jacketless Big Book because of stated anonymity concerns, have begun to use the soft cover edition instead.

### **Proposal**

*We request that AA World Services stop publishing the new jacketless Alcoholics Anonymous and 12 Steps and 12 Traditions books as copies of the jacketed [original] books and instead use the look of the covers under the jackets of the original books. Thus, the new jacketless Alcoholics Anonymous book would cease as a yellow and*

*blue cover with Alcoholics Anonymous printed across the front cover and become a dark blue book with Alcoholics Anonymous embossed into the cover or left off completely, leaving the gold title printed on the spine. Likewise, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions book would revert to the pale blue cover with the large black spine overlap. It would retain the gold Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions title on the spine.*

### **Recommendation:**

Regarding a proposal to stop publishing the new jacketless Alcoholics Anonymous and 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, the committee recommended that the AAWS Board take no action.

-The committee agreed that there are options available for members who prefer not to use the jacketless versions (e.g., audio versions, soft cover editions).

## **Upcoming AAWS Board Meetings 2023 – 2024**

**Dec. 7, 2023, AAWS Strategic Planning (v)**

**Dec. 8, 2023, AAWS Board Meeting (v)**

**Jan. 24, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting\*\***

**March 7, 2024, AAWS Strategic Planning Session**

**March 8, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting**

**Apr.18, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting Conference\*\***

**Apr.20, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting Conference\*\***

**June 20, 2024, AAWS New Directors' Orientation/SPS**

**June 21, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting**

**July 25, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting\*\***

**Sept. 6, 2024, AAWS Strategic Planning Session (v)**

**Oct. 31, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting\*\***

**Dec. 12, 2024, AAWS Strategic Planning Session (v)**

**Dec.13, 2024, AAWS Board Meeting (v)**

**\*\* = GSB Board Weekend**

**(v) = Virtual**

**SPS = Strategic Planning Session**



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October 27, 2023

## What's Happening at GSO

**Bob W., General Manager**

Since the last AAWS Board meeting in July, the employees, and staff at GSO have been actively preparing for the upcoming General Service Conference, organizing agenda items and setting timelines for efficient translation and delivery of Conference materials in English, French and Spanish. The office has warmly welcomed various individual and group visitors, enhancing the Friday morning A.A. meeting with a wide range of global experiences. Visitors have expressed gratitude for office tours, interactions with employees, and time spent in the Archives. To enhance the visitor experience, Fridays are now mandatory in-office workdays for all employees, offering more opportunities for visitors to engage with staff and learn about our services for groups and members.

### Archives

The archives department is currently looking closely at the preservation of audiovisual information. They have conducted a preservation planning survey to assess the environment, storage, and general conditions that support the preservation and access of audiovisual materials. The 2023 GSO Archives Audiovisual Preservation Survey Report was presented at this weekend's Trustees Archives meeting as well as at the October AAWS Meeting.

### Publishing

As a result of the reorganization of our Publishing Department, we established stronger editorial project management. In March of this year, it was reported that 85 items were back ordered for various reasons. Since then, we have returned 61 of these items to distribution. Of the remaining items, 21 are in the revision/update or reprint and will be back into distribution in the coming weeks, leaving just three items that are under review by GSO Staff and the Publishing Department.

Included in what has been returned to distribution are the service kits. Earlier in the year (February), it was reported that the number of backlogged service kits was upwards of 9,300. This was due to the unavailability of some of the kit contents. Rather than waiting for the few print items to become available, QR Codes were developed to allow members to access those items digitally. This allowed for the backlog of all service kits to be cleared except for the Corrections Kits. They are still on backorder due to the inability to obtain the binders that hold their contents. A new binder style is in process and will allow for the backlog of these kits to be fulfilled shortly.

### Language Services

A Conference background translation tracker has been developed, encompassing a timeline for all Conference background and related materials. Further to the tracker, guidelines, processes, and policies are now in place which include deadlines for Conference background and all translations. Clear timelines and deadlines are crucial for the effective and timely delivery of Conference background and other requests. It is important for all employees, trustees, and directors to collaborate in adhering to these timelines and deadlines to complete and submit their work.

### International Licensing & Translations

We are pleased to report that the international licensing and translations backlog has been successfully completed. Newly established workflows enable us to handle requests received within the most recent 45-day period promptly. Every inquiry receives an immediate automated acknowledgment with an assurance of a prompt response. Ongoing refinement of internal policies and procedures is progressing rapidly. Collaboration among various departments, including Publishing, Technology Services, the International Assignment, Archives, Language Services, the Grapevine Office, and the entire team of Legal, Licensing, and Intellectual Property (LLIP), has been pivotal in achieving this success.

### Technology Services

The successful launch of the OnBoard platform marks the long-awaited replacement for the "Dashboard." Implementation was seamless, thanks to well-thought-out plans and training led by the team. The efficiency and benefits offered by this new platform are invaluable. It will significantly improve meeting preparation, access to background information, and interactive tools that align with the collaborative nature of our boards, office, and the General Service Conference.

## *General Manager's Travel*

**West Central Regional Forum:** This event served as a gathering where members, trustees, directors, and office staff convened. It included presentations, workshops, and sharing sessions focused on understanding the service structure and current events. 291 members were in attendance throughout the weekend, of which 175 were newcomers.

**Area 74 Northern Fall Conference:** The General Manager actively engaged in the event, participating throughout the weekend, and observing their assembly. They joined a comprehensive question-and-answer session covering various topics related to activities at the General Service Office and the status of select Advisory Actions. Additionally, the General Manager shared his personal experience, strength, and hope during the Saturday night meeting.

**Southwest Regional Forum:** The weekend unfolded, enabling members, trustees, directors, and office staff to engage and familiarize themselves with each other. The gathering featured presentations, workshops, and general sharing sessions that fostered rich exchanges, learning, and a comprehensive understanding of our service structure and various current events. 246 members were in attendance throughout the weekend, of which 163 were newcomers.

**23rd Meeting of the Americas (Medellin, Colombia),** Bob W., General Manger along with Irene D. (GSO Staff on the International Assignment) and Trustees-at-Large Marita R. and Robert L., delivered various presentations. Topics covered included Unity & Diversity in AA, Preserving the AA Message in a Changing World, and insights into The International Literature Fund and World Service Meeting Fund. This included a detailed accounting of fund activity and emphasis of the need for the World Service Meeting to move closer to becoming self-supporting as well as assistance translating our literature and distributing it around the world. The event provided a significant opportunity for diverse structures from South, Central, and North America to exchange successes and challenges within their respective AA structures.

**22nd European Service Meeting (ESM) (York, England, October 20th-22nd):** The General Manager attended with Irene D., GSO Staff on the International Assignment and delivered a detailed presentation on international licensing and translations, the International Literature Fund, and World Service Meeting Fund. This included a detailed accounting of fund activity and emphasis of the need for the World Service Meeting to move closer to becoming self-supporting as well as assistance with translating our literature and distributing it around the world. Similar to all zonal meetings, the ESM provided an excellent opportunity for various structures from across Europe to exchange experiences regarding the successes and challenges within their respective AA structures.

## *The General Service Office*

The General Service Office serves as a hub of communication for A.A. groups in the U.S. and Canada and as an exchange point for A.A. experience accumulated over the years. GSO staff coordinate a wide array of activities and services. Also located at GSO is Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., which oversees the publication, translation, and distribution of A.A. literature through Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. GSO extends its services not only to groups in the U.S. and Canada but also abroad, particularly in countries without service structures. Additionally, GSO collaborates with committees of the General Service Board and Conference to address diverse responsibilities:

- Collecting and organizing shared experiences and solutions, providing information to members and groups upon request.
- Assisting alcoholics in various situations, including those living in areas without meetings, in treatment and correctional facilities, and in the armed forces.
- Responding to inquiries about A.A. and its assistance for alcoholics.
- Publishing newsletters, bulletins, books, and pamphlets approved by the General Service Conference and providing complimentary literature to new groups.
- Disseminating public information at national and international levels, collaborating with media and organizations focused on alcoholism treatment.

Visitors are welcome to the General Service Office  
Monday through Friday, from 9am – 3pm.  
Tours are scheduled at 10am, 11am and 2pm,  
and last about 45 minutes.  
A 12:15pm guided tour follows the weekly 11am  
A.A. meeting on Fridays.

GSO and Grapevine  
475 Riverside Drive at West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
11<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Floors  
New York, NY 10115  
(212) 870-3400