

# Highlights From A.A.W.S.

September 16, 2016

**The A.A. World Services Board met on Friday, September 16, 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* – To complete aspects of office construction on the 11th floor not addressed in the 2015 phase and to implement necessary corrections, G.S.O. management proposed a Phase 2 construction project for 2016, with the goal of completion by the end of the year and with as little disruption as possible to personnel and workflow of the office. In addition to the itemized construction items, a bid to complete and correct the furniture for workstations is included.

*Information technology* – The 2017 Conference Dashboard is in the testing phase and a World Service Meeting Dashboard was created in English and Spanish. An electronic ticketing system has been implemented for the Translations and Licensing Department to track requests and better manage increased activity. Proposals are being reviewed to upgrade our email system to save and archive more mail while saving money. The IT team is in the process of creating a disaster recovery plan for our current in-house environment and working with Contributions to streamline their work flow processes.

*Human Resources* – Two temporary employees have been hired to process the increased volume of received contributions. Technical training for administrative/staff assistants in office software has resumed; currently six staff assistants are taking a set of PowerPoint courses. The Management Committee reviewed a proposed Telecommuting/Working from Home Policy for the update of the Personnel Policies Handbook, which has been delayed due to current activity. The Job Descriptions Review and Update Project for the Market Survey is completed. All job descriptions have been reviewed and materials are being compiled for the compensation consultant. Notice of changes to A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine health benefits for retirees has gone out to those affected by the changes, including current retirees who are under age 65. Two employees, Lauren Robertson, accounts receivable clerk, and Eleanor Widdoes, managing editor, informed HR about their plans to retire at the end of the year.

July, August, September Travel:

*August 25-28, 2016:* G.M/G.S.O. staff attended Western Canada Regional Forum in Kamloops, B.C.

*August 28-30, 2016:* Visited Unikron offices, Toronto, ON.

*September 8-11, 2016:* Attended National A.A. Archives Workshop, Concord, CA.

## STAFF REPORT

Retired staff member Eileen Gatza and Racy Joseph on group services have been overseeing the C.P.C. assignment, preparing the A.A. exhibit for upcoming professional conferences. The corrections video "A New Freedom" is being shown at area assemblies, corrections committee meetings, and hopefully soon, inside some facilities. The international assignment is continuing preparations for the World Service meeting to be held in October. Group services requested information on meetings provided locally in languages other than English, French and Spanish from central/intergroup office managers in order to

update G.S.O.'s list of other language meetings. The literature assignment is moving forward with five simultaneous projects: updates to "A.A. and the Gay-Lesbian Alcoholic," "A.A. for the Woman," and "Young People and A.A."; the development of literature for the alcoholic with mental health issues; and the development of a plan for the annual review of A.A. recovery literature. At the Western Canada Regional Forum in Kamloops, British Columbia, the 200<sup>th</sup> Regional Forum was celebrated. The P.I. assignment reports that the video P.S.A. "Doors" has been aired in the U.S. and Canada over 80,000 times, with 588 million audience impressions. Work continues on the treatment-accessibilities assignment to review the pamphlets "Serving Alcoholics with Special Needs" and "A.A. for the Alcoholic with Special Needs" and to develop alternative phrasing for the term "Special Needs."

## **TECHNOLOGY / COMMUNICATION / SERVICES**

The committee reviewed a report on G.S.O.'s A.A. website analytics from June 2016 through August 2016, noting that the office is selecting new analytics software that will allow for more robust reporting. The committee reviewed a plan to inform service committee chairs about the availability of online service committee material that will allow them to opt out of receiving material by postal mail. The plan will be implemented by the end of the year. The committee reviewed progress on service material about safety in A.A. which is being compiled from shared experience of A.A. members and groups; work on a draft will continue. The committee watched a brief demonstration of the enhanced learning search feature now available on G.S.O.'s A.A. website. The new feature stores searched-for words and phrases and tracks the items most frequently selected. Additionally, the committee considered use of additional channels of communication with the Fellowship, for example text messages and apps, and formed a subcommittee to continue looking into this issue.

## **PUBLISHING**

*Gross sales:* July sales are under budget with actual gross sales at \$999,830, which is a \$219,813 (18.02%) negative variance against budget of \$1,219,643. For 2016 through the month of July, gross sales are above estimate: \$7,910,507 actual sales vs. estimate of \$7,776,251, which is a \$134,256 (2.07%) positive variance. August gross sales stand at \$1,067,351 (with ebooks), which is a negative variance of 11.39%. Year-to-date January-August 2016 gross sales (without August ebooks) stand at \$8,959,013, which is a \$21,822 (.19%) negative variance against budget of \$8,980,835.

*Web sales:* Total web sales (A.A.W.S. Online Bookstores) for July 2016 stand at \$670,929, which accounts for about 68.46% of total sales for the company. Sales on the B2B online store (primarily intergroup/central offices and other bulk orders) for July are \$495,324 and B2C sales (individual customers) stand at \$175,604.

*Digital books:* Total ebook gross sales for January through July 2016 stand at \$139,791 with 35,706 units distributed.

*International licensing and translation:* In an effort to streamline response to the department's accelerating high volume of international translation and licensing requests and to better manage the increased activity, the Happy Fox ticketing system was implemented in July. Recent translation activity has included projects in Brazilian Portuguese, Croatian, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Japanese, Polish, Russian, Turkish, and Ukrainian. Additionally, Russia – RSO General Service Board has returned signed licenses for the Big Book (a re-translation project) and the pamphlet "Many Paths to Spirituality."

The committee reviewed the international licensing agreement and the revised “obligations clause” and **recommended** that A.A.W.S. amend its license to reproduce and distribute A.A.W.S., Inc. translated copyrighted work with an “obligations clause” as drafted by A.A.W.S.’ IP attorney. The recommendation was **approved**.

The committee discussed the “A.A. History Shelf” – a proposed gift set celebrating A.A. history – and **recommended** that A.A.W.S. bundle the 75th Commemorative facsimile of the First Edition Big Book, *Pass It On, Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, and *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age* as a special holiday gift set at the price point of \$30.00 per set. The set will be offered for sale for a limited period of time, from October 1, 2016 through January 31, 2017; and, with the exception of the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemorative facsimile of the First Edition Big Book, will be available in the three Conference languages of English, French and Spanish. The recommendation was **approved**.

## **FINANCE**

The G.S.O. seven-month unaudited financial report revealed that net sales were \$7,770,863 or \$132,294 (1.7%) more than budget; contributions were \$343,468 more than budget, and an improvement from the June 30 over budget condition of \$257,236. Net profit for the seven months was \$535,117 compared with a budgeted loss of \$684,391 and a seven-month 2015 loss of \$139,496.

It was noted that contributions got off to a very slow start in 2016, with January being approximately \$113,000 below budget, however things have improved each month as the year has progressed. The committee had continuing discussion concerning contributions, the ease of contributing, availability of current appropriate information (possibly including trend charts) on services, and various ways to reach members who are not generally aware with this information.

## **ADDITIONAL TOPICS**

The Board **approved** a recommendation to begin the Phase 2 construction project. The A.A.W.S. board and management will move forward immediately on construction and report back in October to the trustees’ Finance and Budgetary Committee for their consideration as capital expense for 2016.

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