

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

Area 59's Pre-Conference Sharing Session was held on April 8, 2018 in Philadelphia, PA. Panel 55 Delegate Steve O was the Moderator.

During the morning, nine committees, each consisting of 10 voting members, along with an advisor and a secretary, discussed and voted on agenda items for the upcoming General Service Conference that had been previously assigned to them. The advisor was there to explain the Conference process and Agenda Items. The secretary recorded notes for the committee chair to present to the full body of the Sharing Session in the afternoon. Neither the advisor or secretary could participate or vote during the morning session.

In the afternoon, the subcommittees presented the results of their discussions to the entire body of the Sharing Session. Steve briefly explained that AA uses a simplified version of Robert's Rules. All AA members present may participate and vote. Votes will generally be based on substantial unanimity (2/3 of the vote). He explained how the discussion would be done. If a vote was not unanimous the non-prevailing side would be given the opportunity to voice a minority opinion, in accordance with Concept V. The General Service Conference does not ask for a minority opinion and it is up to the individual members to request it. We followed that procedure. The order of presentations from the subcommittees was done by random draw, as is done at the General Service Conference.

Please note that this was done to give our Delegate (Paul M) a sense of the Area Conscience when he represents us at the General Service Conference. Paul will present two Delegate Conference Reports on June 2 in Selinsgrove, PA and June 24 in Newtown Square, PA. A written report will be provided after the second DCR.

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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<p>Literature Item A. Consider proposed revisions to Alcoholics Anonymous:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request to add an appendix reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress. 2. Request to add the A.A. Preamble and Responsibility Statement. 3. Request to add an endnote to Bill W.'s story acknowledging co-founder, Bob S. 	<p>Recommended: "to add an appendix reflecting recognition received from the Library of Congress be approved."</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p> <p>Reviewed the request to add the Preamble to and took no action.</p> <p>Reviewed the request to add an endnote to Bill W.'s story acknowledging co-founder, Bob S and took no action.</p>	<p>There is an appendix in the Big Book that recognizes AA received the Lasker Award. We deserve to be recognized by somebody outside of AA.</p> <p>The committee not consider adding the Preamble and Responsibility Statement to the Big Book it to be necessary.</p> <p>Dr. Bob's Nightmare is a chapter in the Big Book. They did not believe Dr. Bob would have wanted the endnote because he was so humble.</p>		
<p>Literature Item B. Consider request that A.A. (U.S./Canada) publish "The God Word" (a pamphlet currently published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Great Britain).</p>	<p>Recommended: "that the pamphlet "The God Word" be published.</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>They saw a need for the pamphlet to reach more atheists and agnostics. They read it and thought it was good.</p>		

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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<p>Literature Item C. Consider request for the development of a pamphlet for atheist and agnostic members</p>	<p>Recommended: the development of a pamphlet for atheist and agnostic members.</p> <p>Motion failed. Did not have substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>This would reach out to atheists and agnostics. Why do we need two pamphlets (God Word and Atheists and Agnostics)? We have a pamphlet Many Paths to Spirituality. Why do we need another? Many Paths to Spirituality is not enough to talk specifically to atheists and agnostics. It is a moot subject. It should be God of your understanding or Higher Power. Will the pamphlet emphasize using the Steps?</p>		
<p>Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Item A. Review the trustees' committee report regarding LinkedIn as a platform for reaching professionals.</p>	<p>Reviewed the request regarding LinkedIn as a platform for reaching professionals and took no action.</p>	<p>The committee needed further explanation about how we would stay within our Traditions. A minority on the committee said that we should do this in keeping with Tradition 5.</p>		
<p>Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) Item B. Consider revisions to the pamphlet "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional."</p>	<p>Recommended: to make revisions to the pamphlet "A.A. as a Resource for the Health Care Professional."</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>What is a summary of the changes? They want to make this more accessible to people in the military or are incarcerated. They will also list the website for aa.org.</p>	<p>Steve noted that only the Committees reviewing changes to literature get the background material for that. We have to trust the committee process.</p>	
<p>Literature Item D. Consider request for the development of a pamphlet based upon A.A.'s Three Legacies.</p>	<p>Recommended: to develop a pamphlet based upon A.A.'s Three Legacies</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>What would be the benefit of this pamphlet? We already have this literature. The pamphlet would tie all three legacies together and show how they relate to each other. It would have personal stories.</p>		

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<p>Finance Item A. Consider developing a method to standardize increases to the limits on individual contributions and bequests to the General Service Board.</p>	<p>Reviewed the request to develop a method to standardize increases to the limits on individual contributions and bequests to the General Service Board and took no action.</p>	<p>How will the increases be determined? This will be up to the Conference Committee.</p>		
<p>Policy/Admissions Item F. Consider request to develop a policy for the use of the Conference dashboard.</p>	<p>Recommended: to develop a policy for the use of the Conference dashboard.</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>Does the dashboard have the NERAASA financial presentation? No. The dashboard includes historical information on what has been sent to delegates. Is there a current policy? There is no coordinated policy. The dashboard has been abused and confidential information has been shared with people who should not have gotten it. Would the policy to be to not release Agenda Items before they are official? Yes. Put decision in the hands of the Delegates.</p>	<p>The dashboard is a website that only members of the Conference have access to. They get information related to the Conference including background material.</p>	
<p>Public Information Item F. Consider revisions to the pamphlet "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" which update language, contact information and information on the prevalence and severity of alcoholism and add information related to safety in A.A.</p>	<p>Recommended: make revisions to the pamphlet "A Brief Guide to Alcoholics Anonymous" which update language, contact information and information on the prevalence and severity of alcoholism and add information related to safety in A.A.</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>No discussion</p>		

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<p>Report and Charter Item C. General Service Conference Final Report. 1. Consider request that Conference committee additional considerations be published in their entirety both in the printed Conference Final Report and the anonymity-protected digital version.</p>	<p>Reviewed the request that Conference committee additional considerations be published in their entirety both in the printed Conference Final Report and the anonymity-protected digital version and took no action</p>	<p>No discussion.</p>	<p>The subcommittee chair noted that there is too much information in the Final Report as it is.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item C. Discuss workshop topic ideas for the 2019 General Service Conference.</p>	<p>Recommended: The Committee chose the following topics from the background material:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining General Service to your Group 2. What is self support? Define self support. 3. Our expectations for the future? <p><u>Motion carried with unanimous approval.</u></p>	<p>No discussion</p>	<p>The committee picked their topics from 13 that were included with the background information.</p>	

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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<p>Literature Item N. Consider request for the development of a new book combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service.</p>	<p>Reviewed the request to develop a of a new book combining Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions with Twelve Concepts for World Service and bequests to the General Service Board and took no action.</p>	<p>The information is already available.</p>		
<p>Archives Item C. Consider developing a policy on distribution of audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations.</p>	<p>Recommended: consider a need to develop a policy on distribution of audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations.</p> <p>They offered an additional consideration to review the current Archives policy.</p> <p><u>Motion carried with one opposed.</u></p>	<p>No discussion on the recommendation.</p> <p>How is the current policy restrictive? There is a long application that has to go to the Board for approval. They only meet four times per year.</p>	<p>The committee noted that the current policy is restrictive.</p>	

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<p>Trustees Item E. Review proposal to censure the General Service Board.</p>	<p>Recommended: to censure the General Service Board.</p> <p>The Committee Chair read the following statement from the background information:</p> <p>The General Service Conference hereby censures the General Service Board for allowing AAWS to pursue a lawsuit without consulting the Conference before blatantly disregarding the Fifth Warranty of the Twelfth Concept to allow such an exception to occur in clear violation of the Conference Charter.</p> <p>Motion failed. Most people voted against it.</p>	<p>Censure is punitive. What are the consequences of censure? There was a motion to censure in 1994, but it was not passed by the Conference.</p> <p>One of the committee members voted for it to move it forward. There may be legal issues that could affect GSO in New York.</p> <p>The Trustees have a right of decision. Delegates should have been asked. We lost over \$300,000. We need to make a policy going forward. Has additional background material been provided in the past few days? No.</p> <p>There will be a full explanation at the Conference. We should wait for that.</p> <p>We don't know the facts. The Board did what they should have done.</p> <p>Is censure in keeping with the Steps or Traditions?</p> <p>The Board has a responsibility. There should be consequences if they get out of line. We don't have the full story. It would be punitive. We don't understand the consequences.</p> <p>Censure is not a solution. It won't prevent this from happening again. Need to have a policy.</p> <p>Warranty 5 – no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy. They are already paying consequences.</p> <p>They didn't say they were wrong. This is not public controversy. Censure is not personally punitive.</p> <p>If we got the Manuscript no one would complain.</p> <p>We would not punish people in a group for misspending money.</p>	<p>The original Manuscript for the Big Book was going up for auction. The AAWS Board stopped the auction. Money was spent for the litigation that AA eventually dropped. How was decision about the manuscript litigation handled? Was anyone consulted?</p>	

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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Trustees Item F. Review proposal to reorganize the A.A. World Services and General Service Boards.	Reviewed the proposal to reorganize the A.A. World Services and General Service Boards and took no action.	No discussion	Concept references are III and X.	
Policy/Admissions Item E. Review progress report on options for equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees.	Reviewed the report on options for equitable distribution of the workload of Conference committees and took no action.	No discussion		
Policy/Admissions Item G. Discuss the following question from the trustees' International Committee: "Does the U.S./Canada have a role/responsibility in assisting in the development of A.A. structures around the world through sponsoring other countries via direct invitations to observe our General Service Conference."	Recommended: support the development of A.A. structures around the world through sponsoring other countries via direct invitations to observe our General Service Conference. Motion failed. Most people voted against it.	Is this promotion rather than attraction? The committee wasn't sure what was the expected return. This will end up with too many people going to the Conference. There would also be a cost. The current policy is to allow up to three countries with two guests each. This agenda item is to invite people rather than waiting for requests. There doesn't seem to be a point to this asking people to come rather than waiting for them to ask. Promotion applies to public relations.		
Grapevine Item A. Review social media report regarding Instagram, Facebook and Google for Nonprofits.	Reviewed the report on social media regarding Instagram, Facebook and Google for Nonprofits and took no action.	Was there anything contentious in those paragraphs? No. Why did the subcommittee take no action on B3? It was because the information is readily available upon request and adding it would make publishing the Service Manual more expensive.		

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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<p>Literature Item H. Review draft pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues."</p>	<p>Reviewed the draft pamphlet "A.A. for Alcoholics with Mental Health Issues" and took no action.</p>	<p>The committee took no action because the background information did not include a copy of the new pamphlet. What does "Take no action" mean? Our Delegate will make a decision on how to vote at the Conference when he gets more information.</p>	<p>Only the members of the Conference Committee on Literature will receive the new pamphlet.</p>	
<p>Literature Item M. Consider request for revision to Living Sober.</p>	<p>Recommended: support the request for revision to Living Sober.</p> <p><u>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</u></p>	<p>The committee noted that there was information about prescription drugs was taken out. The revision would put that back again. Why was the information taken out? This was not in the background information.</p>	<p>There could be implied affiliation.</p> <p>There would be logistical difficulties to maintain the site.</p> <p>There is an existing CPC page on LinkedIn.</p>	
<p>Treatment and Accessibilities Item A. Review the trustees' committee report on Cooperation with Armed Services Exploration Strategies.</p>	<p>Recommended: do a second survey to obtain additional material to support carrying the A.A. message to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing A.A. members.</p> <p>They offered an additional consideration to assess Veterans Administration facilities for those that have treatment programs and those that have AA participation.</p> <p><u>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</u></p>	<p>No discussion.</p>	<p>There were only 18 respondents to a previous survey.</p>	

2018 Area 59 Pre-Conference Sharing Session Delegate's Summary

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<p><i>Treatment and Accessibilities Item D.</i> Review summary of the Fellowship sharing on the need for additional material to support carrying the A.A. message to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing A.A. members.</p>	<p><u>Recommended:</u> support the request for additional material to support carrying the A.A. message to Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing A.A. members.</p> <p><u>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</u></p>	<p>No discussion.</p>		
<p><i>Public Information Item E.</i> Consider revisions to the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” which expand content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve and adds information related to safety in A.A.</p>	<p><u>Recommended:</u> make revisions to the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” which expand content on Traditions Eleven and Twelve and adds information related to safety in A.A. with the following change “remove the last paragraph “Anonymity at the public level” in the existing pamphlet.</p> <p><u>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</u></p>	<p>Are they changing Bill’s quote? No. Can we amend agenda items? The Moderator said it’s best to stick to the agenda item. A committee member said that one of the paragraphs being added was almost identical to the one that was already in there. Why was the new paragraph added? A committee member stated that they probably intended to remove the old paragraph. How can the committee vote to approve the agenda item if they want to change it? The committee believe that they did not intend to leave in the old paragraph. What are the adding about safety? Committee chair explained that the word anonymous was meant to protect the privacy of AA members. Quote won’t come from the Yellow Safety Card. How can we approve an Agenda item if they are changing it? It should be an additional consideration. The Moderator said that an additional consideration does not require a Conference vote, while this change does. The advisor to the committee read the old and new paragraphs. The wording was identical, except for the quotes from Bill that were used.</p>	<p>The committee noted that the new paragraph being added at the end of the section “Anonymity at the public level” is similar to the paragraph that is already there. They recommend removing this last paragraph. The new paragraph is taking one quote out and putting another quote in.</p>	

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<p>Public Information Item G. Review a progress report on the A.A.W.S. Google for Nonprofit YouTube channel.</p>	<p>Recommended: Continue monitoring A.A.W.S. Google for Nonprofit YouTube channel.</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>		<p>Four videos have been added to the AAWS YouTube channel in English, French and Spanish</p>	
<p>Public Information Item C. Public Service Announcements (PSAs):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider approving the proposed video PSA "Changes." 2. Consider centralized distribution, tracking and evaluation of the proposed video PSA "Changes," at a cost not to exceed \$42,000, in addition to the work of local public information committees. 3. Review the 2017 Report on the Relevance and Usefulness of Video Public Service Announcements. . 	<p>Reviewed the proposed video PSA "Changes" and took no action</p>	<p>The Committee recommended that our Delegate use the Right of Decision when voting for this at the Conference and keep in mind the relevance and usefulness of the video.</p>	<p>The committee did not have the video or script to review. They did not have enough information to make a decision.</p>	
<p>Public Information Item D. Consider approving a Young People's Video submission.</p>	<p>Reviewed the Young People's Video submission and took no action.</p>	<p>The Committee recommended that our Delegate use the Right of Decision when voting for this at the Conference.</p>	<p>This is not a Public Service Announcement. Previous young people's videos have been made using content submitted by AA members.</p>	

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<p>Corrections Item A. Consider request to create a pamphlet for inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration.</p>	<p>Recommended: create a pamphlet for inmates who are to be released after long term incarceration.</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p>	<p>No discussion</p>	<p>Excerpts for people being released that were in the booklet "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell" were removed in 2014. These would be included in the pamphlet.</p>	
<p>Literature Item E. Review report and suggestions on the inclusion of language related to safety in A.A. literature.</p>	<p>Reviewed the report and suggestions on the inclusion of language related to safety in A.A. literature and took no action</p>	<p>No discussion.</p>	<p>There was not enough information in the background material about how the Big Book would be changed.</p>	
<p>Literature Item R. Consider request to add a section on anonymity to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."</p>	<p>Recommended: add a section on anonymity to the pamphlet "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship."</p> <p>Motion carried with substantial unanimity.</p> <p>Minority opinion was given. One person changed their vote, but there was no motion to reconsider, so the motion passed.</p>	<p>Is the language specifically germane to sponsorship? What is the cost of revising a pamphlet? The Moderator explained that the cost for revising a pamphlet was minimal. What are they adding? The chair of the committee said that the role of sponsorship on guiding people on understanding anonymity. The increased use of Social Media needs to be discussed. Education should begin at the sponsorship level.</p> <p>Minority opinion was given. These are not Tradition breaks. Why put it in the sponsorship pamphlet? It is already in the Anonymity pamphlet. Why does this have to be part of the Sponsorship pamphlet? It can be found in other pamphlets.</p>	<p>The committee noted that more people would read this pamphlet than the wallet card. Anonymity cannot be stressed enough. It could help calm fears about anonymity for new people coming to AA.</p>	