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Southwest Ohio General Service Area 56

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Recommendations from the What, When and Where Committee
June 21, 2015

Background

The What, When and Where Committee was formed in May 2014 to take a look at current Area activities, in order to ask What is supposed to happen at Area meetings, When should we be meeting, and Where is the best place to hold meetings, considering the needs we identify.

The Committee analyzed the websites of other Areas in the US and Canada to get a sense of the way they conduct their business. We looked at their Assembly schedules and agendas, Committee structures and activity, District activities and communication methods. The Committee also conducted an Area Inventory in November 2014, to find out what the people who attend the Assemblies/Committee Meetings were thinking about a number of issues.

The recommendations offered here specifically address concerns raised in that inventory, and include a number of ideas we adapted from other Areas, as well as ideas we came up with on our own, through extensive discussion.

There are four primary blocks of interlocking recommendations about the changes we feel the Area needs to make: Area Assemblies, the Area Committee, Standing Committees and Districts.

1) Area Assemblies

The What, When and Where Committee makes the following recommendations to change the yearly schedule and composition of Area Assemblies:

✧ Three per year

- Late February - This is the pre-General Service Conference Assembly. The Conference Agenda and background material will be available to be introduced and distributed, which can serve as a way to encourage and promote attendance at the March Mini-Conference.
- Late May - This will be the Unity Day Assembly. In addition to hosting activities that specifically include local Central Offices, Intergroups and Young People's groups, the Area will present the Delegate's Report on the General Conference.
- Late September - In odd-numbered years, this will be the Election Assembly. In even-numbered years, this will be the Inventory Assembly. In addition, the September Assembly will be the one for discussion and vote on the budget for the following year, which will be distributed via e-mail for review before the Assembly.

✧ Full-day meeting, Saturday

- These Assemblies will be full-day events with an agenda which begins in the morning, includes a pot-luck lunch and concludes by late afternoon.
- Ideally, Assemblies ought to be around 75% food, fellowship and programming (e.g., workshops, panels, leads, breakouts), and around 25% business. The What, Where and When

Committee would like to include some way for GSRs to give reports about their groups at the Assemblies, once per year per group.

- For the time being, the Assembly will continue to meet at St. John's Lutheran Church in Miamisburg.

▲ Conducting business

- Reaffirming that the following members of the Assembly have a voice and a vote in all matters facing the Assembly:
 - All Area Officers,
 - Standing Committee Chairs,
 - DCMs,
 - GSRs,
 - Past Delegates,
 - Intergroup Liaisons and
 - YPAA Liaisons.
 - Alternate GSRs, DCMs, Chairpeople and Liaisons who are present vote only if the regular GSR, DCM, Chairperson or Liaison is not present.
- Rotation in service positions is an important spiritual principle in AA. The What, When and Where Committee suggests that rotation be a consideration in every election.
- In the event that any opening occurs on the panel of Officers, their alternates will step in to fill their role until the next Election Assembly. The What, Where and When Committee recommends the following structure for Alternate Officers:
 - Alternate Area Chairperson – Archives Committee Chair
 - Alternate Registrar/Corresponding Secretary – Group Services Committee Chair
 - Alternate Treasurer – Finance Committee Chair
 - Alternate Recording Secretary – Communication Committee Chair (New Committee)
- Openings for Committee Chairs will be filled by the Area Committee, either through appointment or through finding volunteers, and affirmed by the Assembly at the first possible opportunity.

2) Area Committee

The What, When and Where Committee recommends the creation of an Area Committee, modeled upon the description in the AA Service Manual.

Voting members members of the Area Committee to be: Area Officers, Area Standing Committee Chairs and DCMs (in accordance with the AA Service Manual).

Non-voting members: Past delegates, Intergroup liaisons, YPAA liaisons (to facilitate greater participation in developing an informed group conscience). Alternate Committee Chairs would have a voice in any case, and would have a vote in the absence of the Committee Chair.

As with the Assembly, any Area 56 AA member is welcome to attend these meetings and have a voice in the discussion.

The Area Committee will have authority specifically delegated by the Assembly to function in the following ways:

- ✦ To oversee Area communications as well as overall planning for the Area and reporting to the Assembly – communication is one of the high priorities for the Area Committee.
- ✦ To oversee annual Area budget in accordance with guidelines in approved fiscal policy, while at the same time reflecting a budgeting process that encourages Committees to ask for funding while trusting that Group contributions will make that funding available.
 - Current fiscal policy: The annual budget must be approved by the vote of the entire Assembly, as must all unbudgeted expenditures over \$300. The five officers can approve unbudgeted expenditures up to \$300, with four out of five voting to approve. The Committee recommends that this be changed to read “The Area Committee can approve unbudgeted expenditures up to \$300, by substantial unanimity of those members of the Area Committee voting.”
 - The Area Committee will review Treasurer's Reports and vote whether or not to accept them until the next Assembly, when they will be put forward for Assembly approval. Those Reports must be accepted by substantial unanimity of those members of the Area Committee voting. (Substantial unanimity is defined as a 2/3 majority vote.)
- ✦ To set the Agenda for the next Assembly, including the following items:
 - All business reports including: GSR, District, Committee and Officer reports (ideally 25%)
 - Workshop/education programming, food and fellowship (ideally 75%)

Furthermore, at the Area Committee meetings, the Committee will:

- ✦ To provide functional and planning support to the Committee Chairs to help them focus the work of their Committees when they meet outside the Assemblies. The Area Committee should serve as a training ground and support system for the Committee Chairs in their committee work.
- ✦ To provide support and encouragement to DCMs as they build and strengthen the service structures in their Districts.
- ✦ To troubleshoot Area, District and Group issues as necessary.

Meeting schedule: Bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The Delegate and Area Chairperson will serve as co-chairs of the Area Committee and will set the agenda for the Area Committee meeting. Because this is a business meeting, the Recording Secretary will take minutes, which will be distributed to GSRs and other interested AA members.

3) Standing Committees

The What When and Where Committee recommends that after each Election Assembly, the Area Committee develop a slate of Standing Committee Chairs to be affirmed at the Assembly following the election. For all intents and purposes, these new Committee Chairs will take office in January following the election, along with the new panel of officers, and will constitute the new Area Committee, along with the Area 56 DCMs.

Standing Committees will have to hold meetings outside the Assembly meetings. In order to provide a meeting time and place, the What Where and When Committee recommends that the Area offer meeting space at St John's Church, at a time and day to be determined after the election, once the slate of new Committee Chairs is finalized.

The What When and Where Committee recommends the creation of the following new standing committees:

- ✦ Mini-Conference Committee
Co-chaired by Area Chairperson and Immediate Past Delegate, includes current panel members

serving as subcommittee chairs, along with standing committee chairs and all interested AA members. Typically meets from September – May.

⤴ Communication Committee

Co-chaired by Recording Secretary and Communication Committee Chair. This Committee will provide crucial services in communicating with the fellowship in Area 56 now that the Area will not be meeting monthly. The first projects of the Committee will be to develop a bimonthly newsletter about Area happenings and GSO news, as well as to revamp and update the Area website.

⤴ Hospitality Committee

Chaired by Hospitality Chair with an alternate Chair. Responsible for coordinating potluck lunches and other refreshments at the Assemblies as well as the Hospitality Room at the Mini-Conference.

⤴ Outreach Committee

Co-chaired by Area Registrar and Committee Chair. Responsible for visiting groups who send new GSRs or who send contributions to the Area, in order to thank them for participating. Also attends or arranges for attendance at Intergroup and District meetings on behalf of the Area.

The What, Where and When Committee suggests that the Outreach Committee be a stretch goal for the Area, perhaps to be created in the near future, first as an Ad Hoc Committee to see how it works.

The What, Where and When Committee recommends that every effort be made to identify Alternate Chairs for all Committees, who will be able to serve in the Chairperson's absence and to provide some continuity on the Committee through rotation. Each Standing Committee Chair ought to create and maintain some sort of continuity folder that will allow an incoming Chair to benefit from their experience and activity.

The What Where and When Committee considered whether or not it would be a good idea to combine current Standing Committees in order to reduce the overall number. Our feeling is that it is premature to make this recommendation and that the number of Committees is not necessarily a structural weakness.

4) Districts in Area 56

The What, Where and When Committee believes that Area 56 needs to nurture and encourage the Districts by supporting their activities and participants. The Area needs to be familiar with District activities and needs to make sure that there is District participation at all Assemblies, in the form of DCM reports or other activity.

As recommended by the AA Service Manual, DCMs ought to be full members of the Area Committee; at the same time, the Area Committee needs to link fully with the Districts to support what they decide they need from the Area.

Because the Area needs to invest in the health and well-being of the Districts, the What, When and Where Committee also recommends that an Ad Hoc Committee on Districting be formed in the Panel 66 rotation to determine the best District structure for Area 56. This might include redistricting. It might also include developing plans to activate or reactivate existing Districts.

One stretch goal for Area 56 is to strengthen the Districts to a point where, in the future, Assemblies can be hosted by Districts on a rotating basis.