

PRE-CONFERENCE ASSEMBLY MINUTES
AREA 08 San Diego Imperial Counties
April 10, 2021

8:45am Sign in for Assembly held on Zoom
Zoom ID 949 1673 5944
PW: GSC2021

Meeting Called to Order: 9:08 am by Blaine H., Chair
Serenity Prayer

Declaration of Unity: "This we owe to AA's future, To place our common welfare first, to keep our fellowship united, for on AA unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.

Registrar Notes: Bill S.-please identify yourselves, we will be doing a quorum today by a poll//please correctly identify yourself.

Introductions: New GSRs, DCMs, Committee Chairs, Alternates, Past Delegates, Guests

Secretary Report: Renee R.-Minutes of the January Orientation Assembly with one correction by the Treasurer regarding GSO sendoff.
Minutes were approved unanimously

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl F.- Paul G., Cheryl had to work.

I'd like to welcome you all to the 2021 Pre-Conference Assembly. I am glad you are all here. This is a very important assembly for AA as a whole because this is the assembly when you get to bring the voice of your group to the ear of our delegate. But before you get down to the business at hand, I would like to take a moment or two of your time to focus on the business of this area.

Every November we hold a budget assembly during which we approve the budget for the year to come. This year the Finance Committee has presented a time-line that hands a much greater responsibility to the GSR's and DCM's than in years past. The purpose of this is to give the Area 8 Groups input into the budget planning process well before a budget is presented for final approval.

Two spending plans were presented to the Area Committee in March that represent the funding required to “keep the lights on” in Area 8 for 2022. One plan was the bare-bones if we return to meeting in person for all area business and includes rent and mileage costs. The other bare-bones plan looked at the funds required to operate using the zoom platform.

The question on the table for the Groups, GSR’s, DCM’s and Committee Chairs is “What do you think the future of Area 8 should be?” “How should we proceed?” this decision is only the first of many decisions that will need to be made before the 2022 Spending Plan is presented in July.

Once we have determined how we will be conducting the business of Area 8, we will be able to decide how to use the discretionary funds (money for 12 step work) within our area. The amount of discretionary funds will be determined by the decision made on the first question.

This process will take more of your time and attention than has been required by GSR’s, DCM’s and Committee Chairs in the past. It is the belief of the Finance Committee and I that the result of this process, if everyone does their share, will be a 2022 budget that is agreeable to the fellowship as a whole and bring a greater understanding of how the Group contributions are spent.

You will be getting communications from the treasurer and finance committee regularly for the next few months. The purpose of these communications is not to flood your inbox but to keep you informed of the work that is being done and to solicit your input. Please give these communications your undivided attention and participate in the creation of the 2022 Spending Plan.

February 2021	February Actual	YTD	2021 Budget 58,395.00	Variance with Annual Budget
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Group contributions:	2,790.04	6,885.70		
Individual contributions:	250.53	1,001.93		
District contributions:				
Total contributions:	3,040.57	7,887.63	58,395.00	50507.37
Total budgeted expenses:	2,499.79	4,542.83		-51,659.12
Contributions less budgeted expenses:	540.78	3,344.80		
Total unbudgeted expenses:				
Total expenses:	2,499.79	4,542.83		
Contributions less total expenses:	540.78	3,344.80		
Total Cash Balance: February 2021	25,757.91		25% of budget	
Prudent Reserve Balance	5,000.00			

2021 AA in a Time of Change:

Conference Presentation: Jerry S.-Area 8 Delegate

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/71st-GSC-Pre-Conference-Assembly-PP-Presentation-ENGLISH-REV00.pdf>

All participants have the ability to unmute, to maintain the “humanity” aspect of our online Assembly today//on the Area 8 Website, the GSC information in available-Assembly documents-this is a helpful location to get this information-Delegate’s corner contains more specific GSC information//Conference begins next Saturday, April 17th//See above hyperlink//

Why have a conference? So this fellowship can be here for the future//1951-first GSC//5 year trial//1955-Bill W handed over the 3 legacies to AA//1959 AAWS created//1962-12 Concepts first published//2/3 of AA board are Alcoholics 7 non-alcoholics, 14 alcoholic trustees//2001-4th Edition of the Big Book published.

The General Service Structure: AA Groups, Group GSRs, Districts, Area Assemblies, General Service Conference, General Service Board

Communication up and down the Service Structure is most important//Everything we do in AA is through Committees//93 Areas in the US//Delegates have $\frac{2}{3}$ (70%) majority vote at the General Service Conference//Trustees have 19% and GSO-Grapevine Staff have 11%.

Questions: how were the Areas numbered-Check AA Comes of Age//Alphabetically according to State//What' the panel 70 designation? Started with the first panel in 1951 every 2 years we have a new panel,we will always have an even panel number.

Committee Agenda Item Presentations:

Corrections: Diana -chair of SDI Institutional Committee

Agenda Item B: Discuss innovative ways of carrying the message to alcoholics in correctional facilities/programs

Because of the pandemic, all correctional institutions closed their doors//we deal with Treatment Facilities as well//how can we reach persons incarcerated while we cannot bring in panels//what happens here may only work here and the same with elsewhere not working here//we are looking for ideas from other areas//we are looking for new ideas//AA works best one on one//we have successfully been able to get literature into prisons//we have also kept in touch with the inside personnel during the pandemic//we have been makin recordings of H and I panels, on Zoom and provide this link to institutions that can be shown at any time//but there is no interface//the recordings are only linked to facilities that we were going in to//some facilities can access these recordings and some cannot//individuals behind bars can call someone in a meeting and teleconference, but these calls are supervised//tablets have been provided to have AA stories-but are not in facilities yet//one on one sponsorship in the State Prison System, San Quentin, we go in as visitors (not panelists) and do one on one face to face visitor sponsorship//this has been successful, but trouble since covid so not allowed visitors during the pandemic, but is beginning to restart//We are looking for innovative ways to connect with persons incarcerated//

Open Mic: penpal system? Or inmates can sign up to be on a monthly letter//it's hard for inmates to get meetings inside//train inmates to run their own meetings//phones are expensive for inmates//Donovan and Las Colinas-what's happening at our local institutions-ans: we have a national corrections correspondence system in place//we actively promote correspondence//We are active with most local prisons-some do have independent AA meetings going on in the prisons without outside panels, they are going on inside the cell blocks//Donovan has been more difficult to work with//the county has been accessing the recorded H and I panels//literature is more easily sent directly from the publisher and the inmates are limited to how much literature they can have in their possession//what's going on with the Spanish speaking meeting inmates//I work in the criminal system and we are working on lowering the costs of phone teleconferencing//podcast called sobercast-are these available in the facilities, are the inmates able to sponsor one another in the prisons?//we also thought of tablets and why can't they have Zoom meetings on the tablets, could we get Zoom meetings in on the tablets?-there are firewalls in place not allowing live video feeds//Could the Conference ramp up the Correspondence system? And the Spanish correspondence as well// Ramp up sending in

Grapevines//Correspondences have certain rules//who is paying for the tablets and who has tablets//maybe a penpal system could be done for sponsorship and use PO Box to protect anonymity.

Poll: Quorum GSR-61% DCM-14% COM Chair-8% Officers 5% P Delegates 3% Guests 2% Liaison 2% Members 5%

Finance: Cindy

Agenda Item A.2: Discuss mechanization of group contributions

Open Mic: the pie charts we currently have served us well, why change it/ Groups determine their own pie charts//Central Offices needs a larger piece of the pie in order to keep things running//When sending in your contributions please put the name of your group//Consider the needs of the Gold Can during the pandemic, communication is key to find out who needs help//Groups need to know more specifics on who needs money//Each group has autonomy to determine how they want their pie chart//the GSR is responsible to tell their group who needs money//the pie chart is in the literature//the groups need to be educated on how to do their pie charts//Districts need to know what's going on in the Area -the key is to know where the need is//When we hear an entity is needing, the fellowship responds-pie charts should be re-evaluated//

Poll: Does your group regularly reevaluate its pie chart? Y-42% N-43% AB-16%

Should groups regularly think about and discuss the best use of its monies?
Y-84% N-8% Ab-7%

Should we add language to the pamphlet encouraging groups to reevaluate their pie charts? Y-79% N-9% Ab-11%

Policy: Ernest D.:

Agenda Item J: Consider request regarding participation of online groups in the General Service structure

The Policy committee views the significant increase in online group only meetings warrants GSO to develop a process to officially recognize online groups allowing these groups full participation in service opportunities

Online meetings are not new//they address the AA needs of homebound individuals, individuals living in remote areas, service members stationed in far away places//Online numbers are growing//<https://aa-intergroup.org> Online intergroup OIAA //650,000 visitors a month, Online AA) 3,000 ongoing meetings, Zoom enabled meetings estimated at 2,750, 17 languages, 21 countries, OIAA averages over 22,000 views a day, locally in San Diego 210 Zoom only meetings//North County 230 Zoom only meetings Benefits elderly , people with limited access, home bound or time bound people//attend meetings in multiple languages and time zones//alcoholics in treatment centers and corrections facilities//more affordable with high rent areas// Shortfalls-these are International and can't have GSO numbers for tracking purposes//fictitious Area 95 that is outside the US General Service Structure//these groups need

votes-those that are never face to face meetings// Support of Establishing a new Area-Online groups need to have a voice and a vote//Personal Observations: many people coming in from the courts and newcomers//longtimers are renewing their recovery//what will happen after covid? Because there is no rent and refreshments, the contributions were high because of no other expenses//

Break: 11:05-11:15am

Round Table-Policy Agenda Item J

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/POLICY-Round-Table-Questions.docx>

What benefits could a 94th Area bring to the conference?

What challenges or hurdles would need to be overcome or especially managed?

How does this request speak to the principles of equity and inclusion?

Open Mic:

Poll: Are online meetings fairly included in general service activities and conversations?

Y-29% N-60% Ab-11%

Do we need to shift how we think about and consider online meetings and groups? Y-86% N-9% Ab-5%

Should we create a 94th Area to support our online meetings? Y-60% N-21% Ab-20%

Committee Agenda Item Presentations: Sash D.-

Literature:

Agenda Item N.: Review draft language regarding safety and AA to be included in *Living Sober* and "Questions and Answers on Sponsorship"

Open Mic:

Poll: Does our literature adequately communicate on the topic of safety? Y-23% N-66% Ab-11%

Do you agree with the suggested language in *Living Sober*? Y-54% N-29% Ab-17%

Do you agree with the suggested language in Question and Answers on Sponsorship? Y-59% N-23% Ab-18%

Agenda Item U: Consider if proposed agenda items for plain language, simplified language, accessible translations and large print version of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, as well as workbooks to help study the program of Alcoholics Anonymous can be addressed with a common solution.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ACj1rrddJMqacZQ00OFWSvoHobfAt4wVhkNu4hKTuSI/edit>

Lunch: return at 1:20pm

Round Table-Literature Agenda Item U

<https://www.area8aa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/LITERATURE-Round-Table-Questions.docx>

Do you know of someone having trouble accessing the BB?

Would large print, accessible language large print BB change the message?

Should we unthread this motion-by separating out into components? Y-80%

Should we create a plain language BB?

Should we create a Workbook for the BB?

Open Mic: my group conscious was for the plain language translation, but because of the other changes they voted this down//this is why we have sponsorship-to explain the BB//why not put out AA approved material for better understanding of the BB//A newcomer might be stigmatized because they use a simplified BB or a workbook//AA or the Fellowship has kicked this can down the road for too long-this item includes several items from various groups or individuals, we have been too stringent on people needing to understand the BB because of their reading level//we want to reach more people//we should produce another BB and Workbook, but I got an email from someone with 35 yrs sobriety, if a newcomer goes to the literature table and picks the BB-a harder to understand book that might not help him because they can't read it//this is a translation, not a replacement//the integrity of the BB is maintained in translations//people out there are buying other literature that is not AA approved because AA won't put out these other up to date publications//we are for the simplified language BB and we would like the other chapters to gender neutral//How the BB is translated-is first translated into plain language and then the respective languages-so everyone else has a plain language version

Poll: Do you know of or have heard of someone struggling to access the message in the BB? Y-66% N-33% Ab-1%

Would a plain language, simplified language, accessible translation or workbooks change the BB message? Y-20% N-71% Ab-10%

Should we "unthread" this motion into its components to help coordinate prioritized actions? Y-79% N-14% Ab-7%

Should we create a plain language simplified language or more accessible BB? Y-70% N-22% Ab-9%

Should we create a workbook to compliment the BB? Y-71% N-22% Ab- 8%

Birthdays: JoAnn Z- Josh 15yrs, Sasha 4yrs, Lidia 5yrs, Stephanie 9 yrs, Linda 34yrs, Amanda 4yrs, John B. 34yrs, Marc J, 37yrs, James K, 34yrs, Pam 4yrs, Mark L, 5yrs, Mariana 4yrs,

Dave 41yrs, Jim I 18yrs, Papa Joe 5yrs, Jared 5yrs, Karen Lee 23yrs, Alan R. 21yrs, Kristin 3yrs, Davis R. 24yrs, Mak K, 34yrs, Tanya 30yrs, Blaine 35yrs

Chair's Report: Blaine H.-Good afternoon. Today we hear the voice of our Assembly in regard to the agenda items which will go before the General Service Conference in little more than a week. This is not a dull year as far as the items are concerned. I have already heard spirited discussion at the individual, group, and committee level on several of the topics. Although Jerry will get a "sense of the Assembly" today, he will welcome comments and information right up to Conference Eve. Let us not "send him off" empty handed.

To quote Henny Youngman, "Take the Pandemic... Please!" There does seem to be a flicker of light at the end of the tunnel. We are closer to opening up than we have been in more than a year. However, we should be cautioned not to jump the gun and get a false start. The ability to assemble in person will come with restrictions that will gradually be lifted. Having been properly vaccinated is likely to be one requirement of gathering in a group.

I have been encouraged with the early efforts for our DCMs and Committee Chairs to gather informally. There is a lot of common interest there as well as experience, strength, and hope that can be drawn on by those in need. Hopefully our Alt DCMs and Alt Chairs will be included as well. Time spent in these efforts will be valuable in future service endeavors.

Regarding the updates on our Structure and Guidelines. The Policy Committee is currently going over the suggestions which were submitted following the January Assembly. These will be incorporated into a revision which will be available to the Fellowship and be part of a future workshop. A.A. does not move swiftly, but we are moving closer to achieving a document with which we can all work.

We will be having an Election Assembly in September. The date will be Saturday, 9/25. This should allow Area 5 to provide their technical expertise and hopefully to allow Kathi, our Pacific Regional Trustee to attend. Another reminder to all those eligible to stand for Area offices, please think about this ahead of time rather than on the morning of September 25th. Consider the time involved and any special expertise you might have for a particular office. It would be wise to consider discussing this with your service sponsor.

I know it will be hard to wait, but mark your calendars for Saturday, May 15th. Then we will find out what happened at the Conference.

Alternate Delegate's Report: Monty C.- As the Alternate Delegate, I get to conduct and carry out the GSR School/Orientation. If you missed it today, we have at the beginning of each assembly. Please come and join us at the next one if you are new or would like to participate in the overall service of Area 8.

I participate monthly with other Alt Delegates from the 93 areas. This month the Pacific Region got to be the presenters. We chose the topic of PRAASA. Of the Alt Delegates that were present we each had about 3 to 5 mins to talk about what we took away from PRAASA.

I get to present Area 8 at the SoCal H&I Meeting. I am the Liaison to the Southern CA Conference. I haven't heard from them at this time. I get to liaison to each several committees within the area.

Area 8 got to conduct the General Service Panel at the Spring Round Up. We read and had 3 speakers on various topics. We had an awesome time.

I recently got to visit district 8 and answer some of their questions. I found it to be very informative and great participation.

If you are a new GSR or have done this before and need GSR material that our area provides, please email me your mailing address. I will put my email address in chat. I will mail you a service manual along with other documents that we have available. If you would like to meet up, I love coffee. Lets get together and have a cup of coffee and talk service. No where is the county if too far. I have a dependable vehicle and can meet anywhere.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Committee Agenda Item Presentations:

Grapevine: Lynn/Parker-

Agenda Item D: Review progress report on development of an instagram account.

This item is not new this year//2017//2018 anonymity security affiliation outside contributions, autonomy//What is Instagram: shares photos with captions most users are 34 and younger//you look up an account and click on it//photos are posts, click on post and the photo enlarges//Implementation?Content procurement/proposed hashtags #sober for example//#aagrapevine//Time estimate//Anonymity-up to each individual to control their own anonymity//Security-very secure//Affiliation if we are found with other hashtags that might support other organizations, doesn't mean we are affiliated with them//Contributions-none//Promotion-business accounts can sell products and books//Parker showed example of what such a instagram might look like for AA Grapevine//a tool to reach the still suffering Alcoholic//there is a lot of recovery out there//there is a lot of content available, current Grapevines, quote of the day//Argument against-people who post frequently might get drunk and not be representative of AA recovery//comments would be disabled//Discussion at Committee-this reaches the Young, we need to reach them//who will follow the account for anonymity?//Facebook owns Instagram//We are in support of having an Instagram Account.

Open Mic: would there be visuals with people in them? Ans-photos in Grapevine preserve anonymity//there aren't anything current about videos//I am on the GV Committee-concerns about Facebook that might mine the use of Instagram? It is the user's responsibility to mind anonymity//this is happening whether or not we like it-this puts out the original content of AA//we should become official and should put to right word out there//we do

not want to support this item because of anonymity//social media is every changing and Instagram could become promotional-are there any statistics on how we are NOT reaching people? //bottom drunks are on social media, we need to use social media to let people know about AA// We should just say yes to all media//We are on commercials and there used to be billboards advertising AA//Isn't a website promotion? We should be on all platforms to be accessible//Is this promotion or another GV media? People have to request to follow on Instagram//it would be there to find not promotional//there was a strong support of this agenda time, there is already much content of recovery on social media and we should be represented there.

Item E: Review suggested gender-neutral language options for changers to the AA Preamble.

Use language that is more welcoming to all and inclusive-3 areas made this request//from here on Archives requested the discontinuation of gender specific where-ever possible in our literature//The Preamble was 1947 first written and heard at many meetings and under the purview of the GV//modified once before in 1958//not a part of the BB//...Fellowship of men and women who share...//change men and women to people, individuals or members//preferred change is "people". Could also drop men and women to read " Fellowship that shares its experience"//Meetings could vote to continue to use original Preamble//is Fellowship a gender neutral term?-yes//Fellow can be male or female//

Open Mic: use a gender neutral pronoun not noun ie. those//my group will likely continue to use the AA preamble as it is, this opens it up for other changes//this is outside issues//would this open the BB to be changed as well for gender//what would happen to men's and women's meetings?//what is being excluded? People who don't identify as men or women//it needs to be more inclusive for everybody, some people don't say they are men and women//it should be kept that outside forces shouldn't influence our literature//members of our group are LGBT persons and it should be changed to "people". //we need to make any newcomer feel welcome//if we open this up we may lose the ability to have a women's or a men's meeting//In Canada-because there are so many transgendered people, the rate of alcoholism is 3 times higher in this community//this community needs our program//

Poll: Should GV create an Instagram Account? Y-69% N-23% Ab-8%

Should the Preamble be changed to gender neutral pronouns? Y-51% N-35%
Ab-14%

Public Information: Monty C.-

Agenda Item E: Consider draft plan to develop podcasts Monty C:

This analysis will be continued to be done for the development of podcasts and will involve many entities of AA//there are already tons of AA podcasts available but they are not official//so AA wants to produce its own podcasts-what would be content, benefits and concerns?

Open Mic: this would be a great platform to show what committees do//More outreach to members to work on committees and podcasts would be great for this//I would love to see different series done for AA, such as Bill W speaking, Archival items//labeling podcast from AA is promotion so we are against this//there are already AA podcasts//I have heard great speakers on UTube//Daily reflections would be good//this would be controlled by AA rather than speakers putting their own talks that aren't AA approved//This would be a regulated source of Speaker Tapes//easy way to access these speakers//We are in favor of developing podcasts//esp for institutions and anonymity is easier to control in podcasts//It can reach many people//about the steps and sponsorship and maybe interviews of people in AA in executive positions//Accessible to more people//

Poll: Do you listen to podcasts? Y-65% N-35%

Would a podcast help inform people? Y84% N-6%

Would a podcast help Attract new members? Y81% N-8%

Break: 3:19-330pm

Committee Agenda Item Presentations:

Trustees: Jerry S-

Agenda Item F: Review the "Statement of Concern and Motion to Censure for Submission to the 71st General Service Conference"

Censure is a formal statement of disapproval//I worked with other Delegates in drafting this item//Office Staff Morale-21 out of 25 took early retirement packages//this was a sign that morale in the office had degraded//divided GSB recommended a controversial candidate for AAWS Director//this individual submitted their name too soon of being a Delegate, and was removed from the slate//mismanagement of the litigation, 8th floor renovation, overcosting of consultants, lack of transparency of drawdown of reserve fund.//so we submitted a letter hoping to see a positive change, which has happened//Office manager retired, new interim manager Came in with much experience in General Service//complete review and revision to controversial language for Board Nominating Policies//The letter brought about much reflection, research, consideration and discussion and presented solutions//Generated 116 pages of background information-this was our most significant hope and desired outcome.

Open Mic: this would be punishing the GSB and better would be policy changes//this is forward thinking of AA's future//did our trusted servants violate their trust and therefore personnel changes occurred? No comment//it was a misuse of staff and their experience//were the retirement packages large buyouts and had to do with the drawdown of the reserve funds?

Poll: Does your group agree with the Statement of Concern and Motion to Censure?
Y-56% N-4% Abstain-40%

Archives: Jerry S.: A brief statement from our Area Archives Committee

We got a letter from the Area Archives committee for their opinion//Letter was shared on screen//to stop consideration of the writing of an AA History book//

Open Mic: this has been proposed since 1981 to be published by 1985 which hasn't yet happened//that would have been 30 years after the previous history, not it would be too many years//this is not necessarily appropriate for us to write our own history//and it shouldn't use money to do this//well written letter//breaking down the history in chunks would be better

Poll: Do you agree with the conscience of the Archives committee that was read? Y-73%
N-8% Ab-18%

Review and discussion: Jerry S.- And there you have it ladies and gentlemen! There will be so much more discussed at the Conference and I will have you in my heart when I do so.//the polls I took give me the conscience of the Area//I will vote what I feel is best for AA as a whole//I brought the heart of the Area to the conference with me (Joel C.)I might hear new information today at the Assembly that might change my mind//minor opinions can change a whole vote

Adjourn: 4:10pm

Announcing: Post Conference Assembly May 15, 2021

Responsibility Pledge: "I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that, I am responsible."

Serenity Prayer

Respectfully submitted by Renee R Area 8 Secretary