NEW JERSEY ASSEMBLY AREA 36

ASSEMBLY MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 2, 2024

VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY

Donna S. called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. The meeting opened with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The meeting began with 66 participants, then 75 participants before the first vote

The Twelve Traditions were read as follows: - Traditions 1-4 – Kathy GR, D9

- -Traditions 5-8 Gayle N., GR, D4
- -Traditions 9-12 Christine M., GR, D2
- Traditions 9-12 Unristing M., GR, D2

The Twelve Concepts were read as follows:

- Concepts 1-4 Julie L., GR, D3
- Concepts 5-8 Eileen R., GR, D7
- Concepts 9-12 Jess A., GR, D6

The Warranties were read by Denise P., GR, D8

Donna S. read from Page 86 of the Service Manual regarding service participation. Donna S. reviewed meeting etiquette on page 5-6 of the meeting packet. Mike L. will be the timer.

OFFICER REPORTS

Chairperson: Donna gave her report which was in the packet. Highlights include:

-Attended and chaired the January 2024 Officers/Trustee Meeting and the February AWSC meeting.

-Scheduled and participated in Policy Committee meetings in January and February.

Fielded telephone calls, text messages and emails and approved flyers for posting to the Area website.
Met and worked with Stacey P, Al-Anon member, to review the 2020 financial documents in order to reconcile the discrepancy between information reported on the 2020 Audit Report and QuickBooks. -Plans to attend the Northeast Regional Delegates meeting March 8 and 9 in Massachusetts.

-Scheduled the 2023 Financial Audit for March 23, 2024, at Mary K.'s home in Hamilton, Mercer County.

Delegate's Report: Katie O. gave her report which was in the packet. Highlights include:

-Love gifts need to be sent to Katie O.'s home address before she leaves for WSC by April 17th. Love gifts can't be sent to hotel, but postcards can be sent. Katie's address and the address of the hotel in Virginia Beach are in her report.

-Katie O. had a meeting to get a District Rep for District 1 but no one showed up.

She will be on a thought force for the 2024 WSC and will be on another thought force for 2025.

-WSO road trip will be in South Carolina this year. Open to all members of Al-Anon in October.

-Attended the Chairperson of the Board (COB) presentation including breakout sessions that followed.

-Attended Panel 62 Delegate's meetings in November, December, January and February.

-Attended the NJ Area Assembly Officers/Trustee meeting in January.

-Reviewed postings from nineteen (19) different communities on AFG Connects, paying particular attention to the Public Outreach Coordinator and Technology Coordinator communities, since their positions are currently unfilled in NJ. Alternate Delegate: Liz K. gave her report which was included in the packet. Highlights include:

-Liz noted that she has had no contact with NJIS since the last report. The office sent an appeal for donations in order to remain open. They do not have a formal meeting scheduled and do not have a quorum. A benefit dance is being planned by members in North Jersey for May.

-Insurance policies will be renewed on March 7, 2024. All certificates will be renewed. Groups may request a certificate at any time, at no cost. Turnaround is generally less than one week.

Scott A. asked what NJIS quorum is. Liz K did not know.

Scott A. asked about certificates. Do you need to have a certificate to be covered by insurance. Liz K. does not know, and suggested Scott A. read the insurance policy. Liz K. will send a copy of the insurance policy to Scott A.

Rick B. says that in NJ all non-profits have to have four officer positions filled, then NJIS may be operating illegally. Liz K. points out that NJ Area is not part of NJIS and vice versa.

Treasurer: Mary K. gave her report which is in the packet. Highlights include:

-As of 12/31/23 the checking account had \$23,331.15 and the savings account had \$14,661.85 for a total of \$37,993.00. Income for the year was \$21,969.78 which included a one-time donation of \$5391.71. Expenses were \$16,634.08. Net income for the year was \$5,335.70. Mary noted if we hadn't received the donation from Jal-Con we would have had a net loss of \$211.11.

-In January \$18,000 was transferred from checking to savings.

-As of March 1, 2024, the checking account balance was \$3,362.09 and the savings account balance was \$32,662.89 for a total of \$36,024.98. Income through March 1, 2024, is \$3,152.57 and expenses \$5,120.59 for a net loss of \$1,968.02.

-Mary noted that a donation came in from an on-line donation site called Uncommon Giving. We are

unable to accept this check if we cannot confirm that it came from an Al-Anon group or member. Please do not make contributions through this site.

Scott A. asked if the updated reports had been uploaded to Groups.io. Donna S. asked that the updated report be uploaded to Groups.io.

Recording Secretary: No report. Minutes posted late and have been emailed to members.

Corresponding Secretary: Carrie H. gave her report which was included in the packet. Highlights include:

-Learning the role. Attending meetings. Data analytics on the groups reviewed.

-Prepared and mailed CMA mailing and return address labels for Alagram.

-Attended WSO GRC WebEx conference call on January 13, 2024.

-Only 4 temporary electronic groups left, down from 20 in November. Carrie would like to get these 4 temp electronic groups resolved by March 14.

-There are 19 groups that do not have a CMA. Would like to get that number down.

Deb C. asked if a hybrid group is a temporary electronic group. Carrie H. explained that no, they are not. Deb C. group is not affected by the issue.

Trish asked if Carrie H. was the one to talk to about adding a new electronic group in the Villas. Carrie H. is aware of the new group, and it will be reflected in the next report.

Kasey M. asked about forms to add a new electronic group. Carrie H.'s contact info in her report. Kasey M. to reach out to Carrie H., who will help with completing the form.

COORDINATOR REPORTS

Alagram: Christina M. was absent from the meeting. Her report was in the packet. Alagram was prepared, mailed and emailed to CMAs. Alateen: Not able to make it today. Report is in the packet. Donna S. reviewed AMIAS training sessions. All are virtual.

Mary Ellen asked if there was a list of all Alateen meetings in NJ. It is in Lori-Jo's report.

Archives: Mike L. gave his report which is in the packet. Highlights include:

-Went to Cape May Waves Roundup.

- Will go to Area 45 AA convention. This is Mike L.'s last year and would like to talk to anyone interested in the position.

Mary T. is putting on a workshop in District 8 and would like Mike to attend.

Forum: Liz gave her report. Highlights include:

-Looking for stories for Forum for those sponsored remotely.

-This is the 70th anniversary year for Forum.

-Sales information in report indicated that there were 315 copies of the Forum mailed in January and 313 in February.

Literature: Angela gave her report which was included in the packet. Highlights included:

-Updates on "Did you Know" links *A Little Time for Myself* is in its third printing and is in stock.

-Tom Coffey retiring from WSO.

All 2024 calendars have been mailed out. There are some new groups so if you need a calendar then let Angela know.

-Angela R. will begin working on the 2025 calendar so let her know if there is information you wanted added to the calendar. A

-Angela R. talked about copyright, which is information she will be disseminating with the next calendar.

-Katie O. wanted to send a card from NJ Area to Tom Coffey since he just retired. Angela R. will look into it.

Public Outreach: Karen P., Acting PO Coordinator was not present to give her report which is in the packet.

Rick wanted to know whether to reach out to Karen P or Angela R. regarding literature table for AA conference he is chairing as Al-Anon participation. Angela R. asked him to follow up with Karen P.

Jesse was looking for similar information for LGBTQ+ and it was suggested he follow up with Karent P.

Scott A asked if Karen P is now the Public Outreach coordinator. Donna S. said that Karent P is the Temporary Acting Public Outreach Coordinator.

Karen W. wants people to know she does public outreach but is not Karen P.

Website: AnnaMarie gave her report which is in the packet. She discussed the webpage information. Highlights include:

-The GoDaddy subscription is expiring and will be renewed.

-AnnaMarie requests that you are sending flyers to post to the website, please send PDF so she does not have to convert it.

-Service term expiring this year so talk with her if interested.

DISTRICT REPORTS

District 1 Hunterdon/Warren Counties: Vacant, no DR so no report.

District 2 Morris County: Ken S. gave his report which is in the packet. Highlights include:

-Last District meeting was February 20. 2024 via zoom. The next meeting will be May 14, 2024, after the May AWSC.

Reported \$964.92 in the treasury.

There are 30 listed meetings in his district. 22 are active and 8 inactive. Of the active meetings 20 are Al-Anon and 2 are Alateen.

-The final meeting of 2023 was in person for the purpose of completing their Outreach Project by stuffing envelopes and that were mailed to rehab facilities and professionals in the district.

-Discussing having a Day of Sharing. A committee is meeting to discuss what the Day of Sharing would be like. Need someone to stand for the position of Chairperson of this committee.

-The district continues to support the Butler Alateen group by including their Group Alateen Outreach document in the 2024 Outreach Program.

District 3 Bergen and Passaic Counties: Debbie F. is the new DR for District 3. Debbie gave her report which is included in the packet. Highlights include:

-The first District meeting was last Sunday.

-Debbie F. is the first DR for this district in about 10 years.

-People in her district are enthusiastic.

-Purchasing a District Zoom account.

-New Alateen meeting in Teaneck.

Scott A. requested that certain information be included in the reports, such as meetings, treasury, and the number of groups in the district.

District 4 Essex, Hudson and Union Counties: Angela O. gave her report which was in the packet. Highlights include:

-The treasury is \$218.66.

-There are 31 face to face meetings, including 1 Polic speaking 4 Spanish speaking, 2 women's groups, 1 men's group and 3 hybrid groups.

-This fall the district completed a successful Library/Bookstore bookmark outreach project. 8

volunteers helped to distribute 2400 Al-Anon bookmarks throughout Union, Hudson and Essex counties.

-All temporary electronic meetings in District 4 have changed their status to F2F or PEG.

Jesse commented that he liked Angela's report and asked about participation in District Meeting from Spanish and Polish speaking groups. Angela noted that Spanish member has reached out. Angela O. has Spanish speaking in-laws and recommends speaking clearly and more slowly to facilitate with communication and make them more comfortable.

District 5 Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset Counties: Anne, the Alternate DR gave the report which is included in the packet. Highlights include:

-Monthly meeting held on January 22, 2024, via zoom. 20 members were in attendance with 19 voting GRs.

-Monthly District meetings have been added to the Area Calendar.

-Current treasury is \$1,589.72.

-Peter is heading up Alateen participation at the Area 45 AA Convention with Al-Anon participation. There will be four meetings including a pop up, instructional meeting on Saturday at the same time as AA and Al-Anon meetings.

Ken S. thanked for donation from District 5 to District 2.

Rick B. asked if Alateen meetings at Area 45 Convention are open to everyone. Denise P. says that one Alateen meeting is open and three are open only to Alateens.

District 6 Monmouth County – Vacant. No report in packet. Mary Ellen gave a brief update. Highlights include:

- Had a district meeting Trying to get a DR.

-Distributing Joy of Service literature.

-There is a new Alateen meeting.

Scott A. asked when the last District meeting was DR meeting. Mary Ellen says November 6, 2023.

Updates on meetings and contact information to provide to Corresponding Secretary.

District 7 Ocean County: Eileen R. Secretary or D7 gave the report for Karen P. who was not present. Report is in the packet. Highlights include:

-First meeting of the year was on January 10 with 11 GRs in attendance. At the February 21meeting there were 12 GRs present.

-The district has 19 face to face meetings, 5 hybrid meetings, 4 electronic meetings, 1 Alateen meeting (with spotty attendance) and 1 meeting on hold until March.

-Treasury is substantial at this time.

-Discussion regarding public outreach

-Discussion about Alateen and how to support it.

-Discussion how the district needs to be more unified and how to achieve that goal.

-Discussion about the purpose of the 7th Tradition basket.

District 8 Burlington, Camden, Gloucester: Liz gave her report which was included in the packet. Highlights included:

-26 active groups in the district. In person meetings include 18 English speaking and 1 Spanish speaking. 4 hybrid meetings, one of which is Alateen. 3 electronic groups and 3 Alateen groups.

-Treasury balance is \$2,756.34.

-Ongoing poster public outreach project.

-One meeting in a church uses an electronic bulletin board in its foyer. The Al-Anon meeting is listed on the weekly calendar and parishioners know it is there. The district likes this subtle public outreach. -Brand new newsletter included with report. Groups are encouraged to share with members via email so the hyperlinks work.

-District workshop is planned for April 27th, titled "Spring in your Steps". A flyer is attached.

-This year's Al-Anon committee for Area 45 AA Convention consists largely of D8 members (chair, co-skit actors, topic leaders, etc.)

District 9 Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties: Kathy, Alternate Delegate gave report which is included in the packet. Highlights include:

-19 meetings in the district including a new Spanish speaking meeting on Monday in Vineland and another new meeting on Saturday in the Villas. There are three hybrid meetings and 2 are electronic only using the district zoom account.

-Alateen meeting location has been secured at Grace Lutheran Church in Somers Point on Thursday at 7pm, the same time as an Al-Anon meeting.

-Treasury as of 1/1/24 is \$1,279. Expenditures include Public Outreach literature for conventions and local workshops. Printing of 300 District meeting lists and donations to WSO and the NJ Assembly.

-Rick B. will chair the Al-Anon participation at the Waves of Sobriety AA convention next November.

District 10 (Electronic Groups): Mark in meeting but could not report. Report was included in packet. Donna S. had meeting move on

LIAISON REPORTS

NJIS: Vacant. No report

Spanish Intergroup: Aura B. not present. No report

CONVENTION COMMITTEE UPDATES

Al-Anon Chairperson to Area 45 Convention: Joan M. gave report which is included in the packet. Highlights include: -The speaker has been chosen and the skit, literature table and archives are in place. There will be three closed Alateen meetings, one open Alateen meeting. -If purchasing literature at the Convention bring cash.

-A budget for the Al-Anon participation committee was brought up at the AWSC meeting on 2/3/4 and there was agreement that a budget would be established.

Al-Anon Chairperson to Area 44 Convention: Christina M. was not present today. Her report is in the packet.

Kasey asked about how to contact Christina. It was noted that Christina's email is on the Alagram report.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Audit/Financial Concerns Donna noted that she worked with Stacey P. an Al-Anon member with accounting and auditing experience to review the 2020 audit and QuickBooks reports. Donna S. They were able to reconcile the difference between the income and expense that was reported on the 2020 Audit and the income and expense that was reported in QuickBooks. A reconciliation summary was provided in the packet. Based on the reconciliation it was determined that the books are in order and that there is no issue with the migration of **QuickBooks**.

Policy Handbook Committee Update: Mary-Teresa U. gave the report which is included in the packet. Highlights include:

-Next meeting is March 19th.

-The review is an ongoing process as the committee re-designs the Policy Handbook so that it is more user friendly.

-Discussed whether the "World Service Conference Structure Graphic" is approved by WSO to be included in the final draft of the Policy Handbook. -Asked the Treasurer to send thoughts on the Treasurer's responsibilities to be included in the handbook. -Continue working on the description of the roles of the "Officers" and their responsibilities.

Cynthia asked if every group should have a policy handbook. Scott A. commenting on how the Policy Handbook is related to what the Assembly does with approving new policies, procedures, guidelines.

Task Force to define excess funds update: Tim S. not present so no report given. Report is included in the packet.

Tech Coordinator Thought Force Presentation:

Presented by Ken S. Slides were included in the packet.

-This position is needed because Hybrid and Virtual Assemblies create new tasks that must be managed during Assemblies. KBDM questions reviewed and based on the responses to the questions the Thought Force made the following recommendations: -Active Al-Anon member for at least 1 year

-Technical abilities: knowledge and proficiency of computers, hardware, software and A/V components.

-Proficient in computer technology such as Zoom and Adobe documents.

-Experience as a Group Representat6ie and District Representative would be very helpful but not required.

-Willingness to keep on top of new trends in audiovisual components including Zoom.

-Ability to attend in person AWSC and Assembly meetings.

-Ability to periodically meet and coordinator with Tech Tean regarding what worked, what didn't work, and options to remediate same if necessary.

Responsibilities include:

-Setup virtual/hybrid AWSC and Assembly meetings (create/open zoom meeting, disable chat, start/stop recording, open and close breakout rooms, assign cohosts, develop polls, coordinate with venue for hybrid meetings)

-Facilitate virtual/hybrid AWSC and Assembly mee4tins (renaming, roll call, mute, timer, launch polls, distribute packet if needed, screen share; for hybrid – operate camera, provide technical support as needed.

-Maintains and updates Zoom account; run report after meeting.

-Trains AWSC members as needed.

-If e3quipment is purchased, maintains an inventory of equipment.

-Presents new technology and software ideas to AWSC as needed.

-Creates, documents, and maintains current processes.

-Reports on technology updates at AWSC and Assembly meetings.

-Works with the Treasurer to establish vendor accounts and payments. Establishes a Technical Team and coordinates with team as needed.

Equipment needed:

-Video Camera

-Microphone(s)

-Speaker(s)

-Cables

-Projector/Screen/TVs, Sound System, Amplifier and Laptops.

Discussion: Cynthia asked about whether the Thought force should go to a Task Force?

Karen W. asked whether this would be for the Area or to include use by the Districts and Groups.? Donna S. says this is an Area level position. Carole would vote for this if she could vote.

Mark supports the motion because not everyone can attend in person so there is a need for Tech Support at hybrid and virtual meetings.

Mike L is on the Tech force thought force and the purpose is to get tech support for the Area.

Rick asked whether the Tech Coordinator should be a special worker. Jenn B. says that the Tech coordinator needs a Tech team as well.

Kathleen and another member said that maybe this should be a paid special worker.

Trish asked whether this position would allow a dual member. Donna S. points out that coordinators vote at AWSC so they could not be a dual member.

Donna S. attended the NY South Assembly that has a Tech Coordinator with Tech Team (about six people total), and this worked well.

Kathy B. expressed that a coordinator could run for Delegate so cannot be a dual member. Kathy B. suggests letting a Task Force work out the details of the

Angela O. asked whether a dual member could be on the Tech Team. Donna S. says yes.

Liz K. reminds voting members whether you agree to proceed from a Thought Force to a Task Force. If you have ideas regarding how to implement the Tech Coordinator position, then consider joining the Task Force.

No further questions or comments so Donna S. moved the meeting to a vote.

Motion: The AWSC recommends to the Assembly that the recommendations from the Tech Coordinator Thought Force be approved and forwarded to a Task Force Vote: Yes 55 No 0 Abstentions 0

Lunch Break - lunch break began at 12:16 pm to 12:50 pm. Donna S. resumed meeting following the Serenity Prayer.

Discussion: Gender Neutral Legacies

Donna S. opened the discussion by noting that the question is: "Do you support the Area submitting a request to WSO to change the legacies so that they are gender neutral?" Donna noted this is a yes, no question with your reason.

-Carrie H. commented on the nature of genderneutral language. She says that the Legacies were written in 1955, so may be appropriate to update. Language does not need to be political. So, Carrie H. is in support of updating it, so it is not male-biased.

-Jesse is glad we are going through this procedure. Jesse supports gender-neutral language but reads it in CAL as written.

-Katie O. gave update that she did submit a proposed chosen agenda item for WSC pertaining to gender neutral legacies. Katie O. says there will be a policy discussion regarding using gender-neutral language in the new CAL.

-Barbara tried to share but there was too much distortion.

-Ryan D. does not believe the legacies need to be changed to gender neutral language. In his opinion, the writings use the language of the original author's story. Based on Tradition 10, changing language to gender-neutral constitutes an outside issue.

-Karen P. believes that the Area should not have an opinion on this issue but allow individuals to do so if they wish.

-Cynthia K. would like to use language that is inclusive and attractive to people in the future as well. Cynthia K. believes gender-neutral language is the way of the future and more attractive to younger people. -MaryEllen is confused about what Katie O. submitted to WSO. Donna S. explained what Katie O. submitted for the WSC. MaryEllen believes that the newer CAL, like "A Little time for Ourselves" shows that Al-Anon is changing its language from CAL like ODAT.

-Jean is concerned about how people will react to this change in language, one way or the other. Jean says that her Group supports it and believes that a change to gender neutral language. Jean believes that AA has made some of these changes already in their literature.

-Anne's Group prefers Higher Power over GOD, or other gender identifying terms.

-Mark shared that changing the language at first seems unfamiliar, however, it quickly becomes comfortable to use. Mark supports the change to gender neutral language.

-Debbie asked about how this issue came about. Donna S. says that an individual GR in our Area brought it up.

-Karen W. says that her understanding that the language is about the legacies, and it specifically pertains to gender, it does not pertain to God versus Higher Power language.

-Pat J. asked for an example. Donna S. gave an example.

-Fran M. has been in the program for 49 years. She feels that the language is not broken so why fix it. Fran M wonders whether it is ethical to change the language.

-Rick B. believes this pertains to an outside issue (Tradition 10) so he does not support the change in language to the Legacies.

-Kathleen W sees her higher power as a broad, inclusive "Higher Power," and does not want to impose her belief on others.

-Eileen R. believes that it is an issue to discuss at WSC, but she does not support language that may make some people uncomfortable.

-Carole M. is neutral on this issue but sees there may be legal issues that need to be addressed She would like WSO to review this issue themselves

-Donna S. says that there are 55 people listed on screen as GRs.

"Do you support the Area submitting a request to WSO to change the legacies so that they are gender neutral?"

Vote: Yes <u>20</u> No <u>27</u> Abstain <u>8</u>

Kathy B. says substantial unanimity is 34. Motion fails.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval of Minutes from June 3, 2023, Assembly Meeting:

The minutes from the November 2023 Assembly meeting were not provided in time for the GR's to adequately review. There was consensus that they be reviewed at the June Assembly meeting.

Request to increase mileage reimbursement from .25 per mile to .50 per mile.

Karen P. presented and pointed out that gas reimbursement has remained flat for too many years. Given the rising cost of living.

Liz K. says IRS allowance is 65.5 cents per mile, then changed in 2023. Approximately \$1800.00 in budget

Debbie F. said that 50 cents per mile is more than reasonable.

Carole M. wanted to know what WSO pays. Katie O. says its 20 cents per mile. Katie O. and Carole both agree that 50 cents per mile is reasonable.

Joan M. asked if this reimbursement rate pertains to all NJ Area related travel. Donna S. says yes.

53 GRs in the room right now.

Motion: The AWSC recommends to the Assembly that the mileage reimbursement rate be changed from .25 cents to .50 cents per mile. Vote: Yes: 51 No: 0 Abstention: 1 Motion passes by substantial unanimity

Resumes for Regional Trustee are being accepted from interested candidates.

Donna S. noted that resumes for Northeast Regional Trustee must be submitted to the Chair by March 15, 2024. Visit <u>https://al-anon.org/for-</u> <u>members/board-of-trustees/wso-volunteers/board-</u> <u>of-trustees/</u> for a detailed description and requirements

2023 Financial Audit Scheduled for March 23, 2024, at Mary K.'s home.

Donna noted that the 2023 Financial Audit is scheduled for March 23rd at Mary K's home. It will begin at 11:00 am. Donna requests a GR volunteer to participate. Anne, GR from District 5 volunteered. **Ask it Basket Questions**

-Liz K. suggests getting a Service Sponsor, because they have different experiences to share than a regular sponsor.

-Katie O. asked that her gas reimbursement for WSC is 20 cents per mile and NJ Area reimburses for 50 cents per mile, can she request the difference (30 cents per mile)

-Penny S. asked about whether to support NJIS. Donna S. points out that the NJ Area and NJIS are separate entities. Those Groups in the North Jersey region need to address this issue. NJ Area did not get involved when SJIS had similar problems. These service arms are outside entities as far as NJ Area is concerned. Mark says that he may have a copy of the Constitution for NJIS, so if interested he is glad to share with anyone who is interested.

-Donna S. asked if it would be helpful to have a Zoom training session a couple of days before the next Assembly. Several members thought that would be helpful. Donna S. to arrange a training session.

-Mike L. and Donna S. point out that the naming convention used today facilitated voting so use the same name for the next Assembly. -Debbie asked about her group's contribution to NJ Area. Her group's distribution was mailed out in December 2023 and not cashed until February 2024. Karen P. explained.

Motion to close by Kasey. Katie O. seconded. Informal vote. Motion passed.

Closed with Al-Anon Declaration at 2:02 pm.

Our next Assembly meeting will be held Saturday June 1, 2024. It is scheduled to be in a virtual format. Zoom link has been posted on www.NJ-Al-Anon.org.

NEXT ASSEMBLY MEETING -

The meeting closed with Al-Anon Declaration at 3 PM.

Minutes Submitted by Donna S. for Scott A. - Recording Secretary