



MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING
30 April 2017
2:30 pm Eastern Standard / 11:30 am Pacific
<https://zoom.us/j/171227774>

Call To Order at 11:31 PST

Roll Call by the Chairman, Sam E

Present:

Sam E. – Chair
Martin D. – Vice Chair
Geri B. – Secretary
Joy R. – Treasurer
Courtney S. – IT / Web
Carol M. – Host Committee Chair – Toronto 2018
Thomas B. – Outreach
Patrick Y. – Mission / Vision
Nigel S. – Newsletter
Dianne P. - Emeritus Member
John S. – Advisory Member

Chair's opening comments - Review of Board Commitments

- We are here because “We are responsible...”
- Adherence to AA Concepts, Traditions, Roberts Rules, AA Service Manual and our Bylaws as applicable.
- Committee process – Status reports at board meetings and set tasks to be done in committees. Board to function as oversight and hold committees responsible to the collective group conscious. Whenever possible work to be done in committee. Create opportunities to involve more of our full membership in service.
- Agenda -
 - A lot to discuss so please be prepared to table new topics
 - Reminder we are here to update and vote
 - Some topics that have been discussed between board meetings are included in order to be reflected in minutes to maintain a record
- 2017/18 board meeting times (all to be confirmed) Sam asked the Board to review:
 - 27 June 2017 - 2pm Eastern / 11 am Pacific time (all invited to Vegas if you need an excuse)
 - 15 September 2017 – pre regional convention board dinner and tour of 2018 convention space in Toronto (6 pm Toronto EST time)

- 17 September 2017– post regional convention board meeting in Toronto (3-6 pm EST)
- 9 January 2018
- 10th April 2018
- 23rd August 2018 (Toronto)
- 24th August 2018 informal open membership at large Q&A during ICSAA 2018
- 25th August 2018 formal open membership at large voting business meeting during ICSAA 2018
- 26th August 2018 (Toronto with New Board)
- 17th November 2018 (Last board meeting of this board, pass off to new board) possible in person option in Las Vegas

Old Business

- A. Approval of Minutes of 10 January 2017 Board Meeting completed via email prior to this meeting, with unanimous approval.
- B. Presentation of Working Draft of Mission/Vision Statements by Pat Y.

Secular AA is a non-profit service organization representing the special needs of Alcoholics Anonymous members who desire a secular path to recovery. Secular AA is dedicated to serving its members by promoting formation of and supporting universal access to secular AA meetings, encouraging forums for the free and open exchange of ideas, and fostering community within a growing population of secular-minded alcoholics. Secular AA does not promote or endorse any particular belief system, and does not seek to impose the beliefs or practices of its members upon anyone. Secular AA operates as a special interest group within the guidelines of Alcoholics Anonymous and is firmly rooted in the Third Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous - that the ONLY requirement for AA membership is the desire to stop drinking.

Discussion to separate the Mission and Vision Statements so that the Mission Statement be short, a sentence or two, and the Vision Statement be longer, more detailed.

Discussion on the use of "special interest group" "special needs". All Board Members to submit thoughts via email to Pat. Martin will join as committee member. Deadline for next draft: One Month (May 31st)

- C. Corporate housekeeping
 - 1) Secular AA, Inc.
 - Carol confirmed completion of paperwork and filings
 - 2) ICSAA Toronto 2018, Inc.
 - Nigel confirmed completion of paperwork and filings of the Canadian entity, with Carol, Martin and Nigel as directors
 - 3) Bylaws
 - Pat is working on initial draft. Requested input from Board. Sam directed members to provide suggestions, samples within one month.
 - 4) Board liability insurance

- Carol questioned the need for E&O insurance. Sam will investigate with business associate. Brief discussion of other insurance needs tabled to later in the meeting where already on the agenda.

5) Dissolving WAAFT-IAAC

- Sam reported that dissolution was completed as far as he knows

D. Treasure

- Joy reported the details of the Treasurers Report have been posted on the Board Website. Donations have started coming in. Nigel is the Treasurer for the Host Committee. Their expenditures will be reported as a line item of the Board Financial Statements.

E. 7th tradition involvement with AAWS

- A discussion on contributing a portion of general contributions to the conference (not the revenue to run the conference) to AAWS as part of practicing the 7th Tradition. Details and guidelines for ongoing procedures can be incorporated into the Bylaws. An initial contribution of \$100 to AAWS was unanimously approved.

F. IT

1) John and Courtney Podcast

- John will send a link to all Board Members for the recording of the podcast for members to listen. It will be on agenda to discuss at next meeting.

2) secularaa.net (Board Website)

- Courtney clarified that the Board Website is only for Board members and Board business. He is waiting on the Mission & Vision Statements so they can be added.
- All Board documents are all on this website.

3) Secularaa.com (convention website)

- Courtney will continue to be sole administrator of the site. Will work closely with the Host Committee to post any content they want posted.

4) Secularaa.org (information, outreach and service website)

i. Links to other Secular resources

- Courtney has been waiting for Board input. Motion unanimously passed to:
- Place notice of "leaving secularaa.org website"
- Put a statement that: on pages that links to other websites are "not affiliated or endorsed by Secular AA"
- Thomas will work with Courtney on wording of disclaimers
- Courtney mentioned there are also other disclaimers already on the websites.
- Discussion on how to handle requests for links to other websites

- Courtney recommended we look at the at AA.org for the Website Policy, which would provide guidance. Sam asked that all Board Members look at that wording for future reference.
- Courtney explained that all posts are now reviewed and approved by a moderator.

ii. Meeting listings, outreach

- Courtney reported about the robust activity with about 400 meetings with contact details currently being listed.

iii. Newsletter

- Nigel stated he has been waiting for content. Courtney noted that when the Newsletter is ready, it can be easily placed into the website. Nigel asked about what to do about editorial content that would be other than just him. Sam suggested we keep to factual content for now and develop an editorial guideline in the future.

G. Conference guidelines (Martin)

- 1) Clarification made that the Conference Guidelines would be developed as this Toronto conference is developed to enable a document which will be separate from the Bylaws of the Conference. Use the “old” bylaws and take what is not needed in the Bylaws & can be used as part of guidelines. Sam suggested we stay aware of what we are doing that can be used.

H. 2016 attendee survey (Thomas)

- 1) After a discussion, a Motion proposed by Thomas that Courtney and he, by June 1st, will work together to find out what it will take to be able to use the survey form Courtney created and disseminate it to the Austin attendees, and will move forward with sending it out if the cost is less than \$250. Passed unanimously.

I. 2018 Conference

1) Marriott (Carol)

i. Credit Application

- Sam reported that he has spoken to the hotel representative who agrees that all the Marriot “guidelines” are not necessarily all needed to approve the credit for the conference. Information from the Austin conference, local Toronto information, and personal information from Sam has been given and we are awaiting approval from the Marriot accounting department.

ii. Room commitment

- Nigel reported that the conference has committed to 300 room nights from August 21 to August 28, 2018. Non fulfillment penalty comes in if we do not meet 240 room nights. Sam suggest we looking to how the rhythm of registrations came into Austin. eg, did a lot of bookings come in late?) Earliest we can open room registration is August 21, 2017, per the hotel. Nigel suggested we wait to start the registration for the conference until the rooms are available to avoid people registering for the conference and looking elsewhere for housing. Dianne suggested we put a

disclaimer on the registration website that housing is registrants' responsibility.

- Recommendation that the registration fee be \$125 CD and those paying in other currency be responsible for the conversion fees. Sam suggested we may be over complicating the issue, since most people are paying online with credit cards. Nigel noted that with the \$125 fee, Canadian tax has to be paid, leaving net of \$110 per attendee.

iii. Food

- After looking at the Budget & discussion, the City Committee (Nigel) recommended and a motion was made that as part of the conference fee, the plan would be that there would be optional, additional fee, meal on Friday; we would have lunch on Saturday included in registration, no evening meal, and Breakfast Sunday morning included, as well as 3 separate coffee breaks, spread out during the conference. We do not have to commit to the hotel until later in the year.

iv. Liability Insurance Rider

- Nigel reported we are responsible for any damages to the hotel space. He has been looking into Liability Insurance. There is a question about if this is "open to the public". Sam suggested to try to find out the difference in premium, and to get several quotes.

2) Registration (see previous discussions on Timing, Currency, Outreach, website)

i. Entry into Canada

- Nigel reported that per suggestion from Canadian immigration the Conference has been registered with them, and a Letter of Invite has been developed, which might be used to invite someone "with Issues" getting into Canada, to be invited to the conference as workshop leader, etc.. Sam suggested that there be a link on the website about getting additional information.
- "Temporary Resident's Permit" - The Canadian Government may waive the \$200 fee for obtaining this permit. This is done on a case-by-case basis.

3) Theme - Carol

i. New Ideas

- Widening our Gateway
- Inclusion and Diversity
- The Secular Alternative

ii. Previous Ideas

- Secular AA Comes of Age
- I Am Responsible
- Only Requirement

iii. Sam requested that all Board members get back to Carol within 2 weeks with other ideas and preferences on current suggestions

- 4) Ideas for Workshops - ongoing ideas welcome
- 5) Program committee guidelines (Carol & Geri)
 - i. Carol gave overview of the ongoing work, which is to develop the guidelines as we go along
 - ii. Carol requested input on guidelines for speakers
 - Motion to consider Class A Trustees as speakers - passed unanimously
 - Motion to consider medical professionals as speakers- passed unanimously
 - Motion to consider any speaker - passed unanimously
 - iii. Discussion to allow Program Committee discretion on any sobriety requirements.
 - Motion passed unanimously to allow the Program Committee their discretion
 - iv. Sam requested the Program Committee consider having an "extreme opinion", or opposing opinion somewhere within the conference so that we do not appear biased. Program Committee chairman Carol agreed.
- 6) Vendor Tables
 - i. Carol reported that the hotel does not charge extra to have Vendor Tables
 - ii. Discussion on if to have vendors and if so, what is the criteria
 - Motion to have any vendors who want to come be allowed, with a disclaimer statement in the vendor area that they are not vetted by the Conference - passed unanimously
 - Motion to have host committee decide if and how much to charge the vendors - passed unanimously

J. 2020 Convention Bid Committee (Joy)

- 1) Joy expressed needing additional information on the RFB process. Dianne and Carol will put information on the process on a google doc.
- 2) Discussion on when should we have the secular international conference: 2025? or 2020? which are dates of AA International Convention, maybe having an in between date.
- 3) Discussion on having a secular AA presence at the AA International Convention
- 4) Tabled - to think about issues

K. Outreach (Thomas).

- 1) Thomas has created a subcommittee for Outreach with members: Joe, Steve, Eric Carlson

- 2) Thomas suggested we have 9 coordinators for 9 regions of North America, plus one for International, for total of ten members to facilitate outreach efforts.
 - 3) Would like to encourage that the conference be open to believers coming to our conference
 - 4) Have been contacted by United Coalition of Reason who wanted us to link from their website and committee has agreed not to link to them but to allow them to link to us.
 - 5) Discussion on Facebook page ICSAA Toronto 2018 set up by Joe C. Courtney mentioned there is already a ICSAA Toronto 2018 page. Agreed to coordinate these pages. Sam requested to have Joe use a SecularAA email for the page. Courtney will coordinate.
 - 6) Convention attendance in 2018 -
Sam reported he and Thomas and Courtney have been working on some issues offline. They will continue working on what the process will look like.
 - i. Are we a group of AA groups or a group of AA members?
 - ii. Regional representation?
 - iii. Organizational model: Intergroup, general service, free standing committee (like ICYPAA), or something else?
- L. Full Membership - participation/accountability – Identifying our Group Conscious (Sam, Courtney & Thomas) -

UPDATE: Members are in the process of dealing with items offline and will have a report in the future.

- 1) Are we a group of AA groups or a group of AA members?
 - i. Regional representation?
 - ii. Organizational model: Intergroup, general service, free standing committee (like ICYPAA), or something else?
- 2) Requirement for membership
 - i. Self-determined (you are if you say you are)
- 3) How do we take our group conscious?
 - i. At ICSAA for ICSAA business
 - ii. Online meeting
 - Live or forum; or
 - In person during ICSAA conferences
- 4) Secular meaning for our purposes
 - i. No religious affiliation; or
 - ii. Non-religious

Definitions of secular:
(osforddictionaries.com)

Not connected with religious or spiritual matters.

(merriam-webster.com)

- 1 a : of or relating to the worldly or temporal [secular concerns]
- b : not overtly or specifically religious [secular music]
- c : not ecclesiastical or clerical [secular courts][secular landowners]

2 : not bound by monastic vows or rules; specifically : of, relating to, or forming clergy not belonging to a religious order or congregation [a secular priest]

New Business

A. Making board minutes available: to whom/how/when?

1) Motion to post a version of the minutes which has only the motions and the votes be posted on SecularAA.org as well as the SecularAA.net

B. Public statements - such as the recent Podcast, need for Policy Statement - TABLED

C. Registrar Position Needed - Tabled

D. Nigel & Host Committee working on getting discounts for travel. TABLED

Executive Session – None

Adjournment at 4:40 PDT