

Families Anonymous
Preliminary (version 1) Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting
June 27, 2020

I. Call to order:

- Call to order made at 2:02 pm EDT, by Barbara S (Group #1345) World Service Board (WSB) Chair.

II. Welcome: Barbara S:

- Barbara welcomed the Board members, Delegates, and all the attendees.
- This virtual meeting is a first for the ABM; Barbara reviewed the rules for attendance.
- Not unlike other businesses / organizations, Barbara mentioned that our financials reflect the difficulties encountered this year. These include:
 - Literature sales have been on a declining pattern for the past few years.
 - Impact of Covid-19 on group meetings.
 - Unexpected expenses associated with the development of the new website, due to the poor condition of the previous website.

The board has been doing their best to overcome these difficulties.

III. Report from the Credentials Committee Chair - Maria S (Group #2056):

- A copy of the Credentials Committee Chair's Report is included as Appendix 1.
- As of June 26th, 235 groups have met the deadline to re-register their groups and be eligible for voting.
- A quorum, more than 24 (i.e., 10%) has been met to transact business.
- A quorum, more than 36 (i.e, 15%) has been met for election of officers and board members at large.
- 17 votes were received by email; 16 votes were collected by mailed-in ballots; 8 groups appointed the Credentials Chair as proxy. Although 14 delegate forms were previously received by the Credentials Chair, only 10 delegates were present at the meeting to vote. Total voting number is 51.

IV. Old Business

- **Approval of 2019 ABM Minutes:** David M (Group #337) moved to approve; Ann P (Group #1301) seconded; voted on and approved.
- **Approval of Final FY2019 and FY2020 Financial Reports:**
 - Due to the timing of the ABM this year, Cindy C, Treasurer (Group #1906) was able to present the results of both FY2019 and FY2020 financial statements.
 - Cindy reviewed the statements prepared by our independent Certified Public Account (CPA). The Balance Sheet shows:
 - Total assets this year were \$154K and our liabilities are \$3K. We are in a good financial position at this time (April 30). The bulk of our assets are in cash; this is a very healthy position to be in.
 - The change in year over year: our assets exceeded our liabilities last year as well, and the bulk of our assets then were also in cash. (Again, a healthy position to be in.)
 - The change in cash year over year went down by ~\$22K.
 - Looking at the profit and loss statements, we had a \$29K net loss this year; last year was a little over break even.

- The income statement shows there has been a \$27K decline in revenue year over year.
 - Our literature sales are down ~\$8K; Covid-19 is responsible for ~40% of that decrease; 60% is a reflection of declining literature sales.
 - Contributions were also down:
 - Group donations were down by \$4.4K year over year.
 - Individual donations down by \$2K.
 - The convention that took place in FY2019 had an especially good donation of \$11K; the convention that took place in FY2020 did not have a contribution.
 - Cost of sales was down. This is expected since sales were also down.
 - Operating expenses: we have a ~\$9K increase due to:
 - An increase in payroll expenses of \$4K. Approximately \$2K of this was due to time spent by our Data Management Coordinator working on the new website transition (a one-time expense). The other \$2K represents salary increases to our two employees in 2020.
 - An increase of \$3K for internet and website expenses due to the change in website vendors and new website. This was a one-time expense.
- We also have a Financial Oversight Committee that reviews the financial records on a quarterly basis. They issued two official reports, one for each of the two fiscal years. They indicated that there were no discrepancies, and all the internal numbers reconciled with the official numbers published by the independent CPA.
- **Motion to approve the FY2019 and the FY2020 Financial Statements and Oversight Committee's Annual Reports:** motion made by by Marcia C (Group #494), seconded by Helen H (Group #1985), voted on and approved.

V. New Business

- **New Website**
 - The new website is up and running and is a vast improvement from the old one.
- **Call for 2021 Convention Bid**
 - Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, no convention will be held in 2020.
 - Matthew B (Group #1820) asked where the convention will be held in 2021. Barbara indicated that we are expecting Louisville, KY to put in a bid for the 2021 convention, pending resolution of Covid-19. The cancellation insurance would not cover Covid-19. We will send out an email blast once it is confirmed that Louisville has submitted their bid and it is approved.
 - If anyone is interested in hosting the convention in 2022, they should reach out to Barbara.

VI. Report of the Nominating Committee- Maria S, Credentials Committee Chair

- **Nominees on Ballot for Officers for 2020/2021 term:**
 - Treasurer - Cindy C (Group #1906)
- **Nominees on Ballot for Board Members at Large for the 2020/2021 term:**
 - Ann P (Group #1301); renewal of term
 - Chris Y (Group #2056); new to the Board
 - David M (Group #337); renewal of term
 - Jeff S (Group #1906); new to the Board (appointed during year by Chair)
 - Marc B (Group #288); renewal of term
 - Mike B (Group #2105); new to the Board
- **Nominations from the Floor for Board Members at Large for the 2020/2021 term:**
 - None.

- **Motion P-01, on Ballot**

- **Motion:** The World Service Board moves to approve the following change to the FA Bylaws:

Article VIII – Standing Committees - Section 6

- **Current wording:** The Newsletter Committee shall be responsible for editing and publishing six (6) issues per year of the FA house organ, "The Twelve Step Rag," or at some other intervals approved by the WSB. The Newsletter Committee Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that publication and distribution of the Rag is consistent with the members' mandate.
- **Proposed New Wording (New text in BOLD/Underlined):** The Newsletter Committee shall be responsible for editing and publishing six (6) issues per year of the FA **newsletter** or at some other intervals approved by the WSB. The Newsletter Committee Chair shall be responsible for ensuring that publication and distribution of the **newsletter** is consistent with the members' mandate.
- **Rationale:** The recent change of the FA Newsletter name from "The Twelve Step Rag" to the "Serenity Messenger" requires this change to the bylaws and approval by the membership.

Motion made by George, seconded by Bob S (Group #2056).

VII. 2018/ 2020 State of the Fellowship Report - Barbara S

- **Our Present Statistics**

- The Registration platform was in much better shape this year. With the new website up and running, groups had a smooth time registering on line. Our numbers given here are based on the groups that have registered in the past year.
 - Total number of US Groups: 198
 - The number of new US Groups this year is 19.
 - Number of US Groups that closed this year is 9.That makes for an increase in 10 US groups compared to last year.
 - Total number of International Groups: 194
 - The number of National Service Boards (NSBs) that have been set up in other countries: 4.
 - Total number of Intergroups worldwide: 5.
- The WSB decided in these unprecedented times to do away with the usual deadlines for registering groups and then voting. Some groups have found a way to meet virtually, but others have not, making both registrations and returning their ballots difficult. We decided to accept any registrations and votes that have come in right up until the actual ABM.
- We have had trouble reaching Mexico's NSB. It seems that their website was or is inactive. Our International Groups Committee has been working on reaching out to them.

- **World Service Board (WSB)**

- Families Anonymous has been blessed by the dedicated, hardworking men and women of the World Service Board of Directors.
- They work tirelessly to keep FA up and running. The wonderful literature you love to read and depend on, the website you use, the World Service office, the group outreach, and *The Serenity Messenger*, just to name a few, are all overseen by the WSB.
- It is truly an international board.
 - 13 of us are from the US,
 - 1 from the UK,
 - 1 from Greece,
 - 1 from Australia.

- One of our longest standing members is retiring as of this ABM. We sadly say good bye to Donna D (Groups #278, #279, #590, #2068, #270) who has served the Fellowship and the WSB for over 10 years. She has been one of our strongest standing members who has led our board with her wisdom and her knowledge of our fellowship and its traditions. She will surely be missed. Thank you for your service.
- Gratefully, we welcome 2 new volunteers to the WSB: Mike B & Chris Y.
- We are always looking for members to serve on the WSB, to give service to the fellowship that has helped them. If you are interested in serving, please contact me (wsb_chair@familiesanonymous.org). You can also reach out to the World Service Office, (familiesanonymous.org) and they will forward your information to me.
- Please go back to your groups and ask if anyone has any interest.
- **World Service Office (WSO) Staff**
 - Our World Service Office has our only 2 employees: Angel and Nicole. They do their job well and FA would be at a loss without them.
- **FA Newsletter**
 - The Serenity Messenger is FA's bimonthly newsletter and can be found on the FamiliesAnonymous.org website.
 - You can also sign up on our website to have an email sent to you with the link any-time a new issue comes out.
 - In order to keep this publication going we need some help. A lovely FA member, Elizabeth from India, has been doing all the editing and layout herself. This a lot to ask from one person. If you or anyone you know has an ability in one of these areas and is willing to help, we would be very grateful.
 - Another way you can help is to write an article, a story, or a poem related to FA and email it to newsletter@familiesanonymous.org.
 - If everyone here goes back to your groups and relays these messages, it could make all the difference.
- **World Service Summary**
 - Finances
 - The World Service Organization's expenses have gone up this past year. We incurred a larger than usual expense, bringing our new website on line. Thankfully the creation of this website is a one-time but much-needed expense.
 - The donations made by individuals and by the groups are critical to FA's survival. Unfortunately, these donations have been on a continually downward trend for many years now, leaving us with a large deficit.
 - Our Traditions tell us that we are to be a member-based supported organization, declining outside donations.
 - It is difficult to run an international organization with the declining donations and loss of literature sales, which are our only income. Please encourage your groups to send donations into the WSO as often as possible.
 - A Zelle account has been set up to make it easier for your treasurers to send in money and for individual donations. Use donate@familiesanonymous.org as the email address for sending the funds.
 - Another easy way for individuals to donate is to go onto the FA website.
 - Click on the Donate bottom at the top of the Home screen. Your computer will walk you through the process from there.
 - There is even a check box to make your donation a monthly recurring one.
 - Even a small gift of \$10 a month goes a long way to help us to keep FA strong, to continue our growth and to get our message out to the people who need us. Please help us give to others the gift of help that has been given to you.
 - Growing the Fellowship
 - We need to grow our membership in order to survive.
 - Each group needs to step up its Public Information campaign.

- Take our professional packs found at our literature store on the FA Website to your clergy, to your doctors, to local rehab centers, and schools.
- Post information about your local meetings on your supermarket's bulletin boards.
- Let us help others in need to find us. Most people have no idea we exist. This has got to change for FA to survive!
- **Closing Remarks**
 - In closing, as I said last year and the year before, it is time for Families Anonymous to step "Out of the Darkness." The members of FA need their anonymity, not FA itself. We need to get inventive and get our name out there. We need to STOP being the best-kept secret in town. Thank you delegates for your service today . Thanks to all of you for attending this meeting, for your input, and your kind attention.
- **Comments From the Floor**
 - David E (Group #795) asked what platform is used to edit the newsletter. Bob S indicated that Elizabeth currently uses Word, but that is about to change. Nicole from the WSO has agreed to help lay out each issue. She will be using Canva.com to set up a template.
 - Andy L (Group #252) had a question about literature. Since many groups are now meeting virtually, and most literature is available only in hard copy, is it possible to email a pdf version to new members? This would be especially helpful for new members.
 - Ann indicated that she recently met with George and Donna to discuss this. They are not comfortable sending pdfs. We have many things available as a free download from the website.
 - George mentioned that the need for electronic copies is fairly new due to Covid-19 and virtual meetings. Our copyright policy does allow groups to make copies of our literature for use during the meeting. If you do it in hardcopy, those copies need to be destroyed at the end of the meeting. We are extending this to the new world of virtual meetings. You can scan the document and share the scan during the virtual meeting. All we ask is that you don't distribute it after the meeting.
 - Andy indicated that when we have a new member who is in distress, it's hard to direct them to a new website, etc. It's easier to ask for their email and then send it. Andy asked if there is something more we can do until we return to face-to-face meetings. The Board has been discussing options, and there may be more guidance forthcoming.
 - Distributing pdf copies would open our literature to copyright infringement.
 - Donna added that the Group Outreach Committee is working with the Meeting Without Walls Group and we may be able to share some of the solutions that they have used. For example, the member leading the meeting can share their screen. There are many pieces on our free download website; these are often enough to help the newcomer gain an understanding of our program. You can direct them to that part of the website, or download them yourself and send it to the newcomer. Also the Literature Chair can mail hardcopies of available literature to new people. We don't want to overload the newcomer. Most of the material often used in newcomer packets is free/downloadable.
 - Stacey D (Group #1345), who is Literature Chair for her group, wanted to mention that "*Are You At Wit's End*" and "*Are you Torn Apart*" are valuable to newcomers; they are free / downloadable and contain most of the important readings. "*Letter from My Addict*", and "*Newcomer Letter* " are also good to send to newcomers.

- Ann mentioned that TABW is available as an e-book, from Nook, I-Tunes and Amazon.
- Donna mentioned that “*Hope for Troubled Families*”, as well as the ones mentioned by Stacey D are good for increasing awareness of FA. They are interactive, and each group can enter their own information. They can be sent to other institutions dealing with families in need.
- David E asked how complicated is it to sell our material electronically; can we sell other items besides TABW. Ann indicated that we make considerably more money from hard copy sales than e-book sales. There is a minimal cost associated with putting together material as an e-book. Ann indicated she would consider with Cindy and the Literature Committee whether, if we bundle some literature, it would be financially viable to do so. It might be helpful to the fellowship in these times.
- Matt B asked if the WSO pays for GoToMeeting. Their Chicagoland group is looking to use something to do presentations or quarterly training.
 - Barbara indicated that that the WSO pays for it annually and we use it for our monthly Board meeting and committee meetings. We get a discount for being a non-profit.
 - Donna indicated that the Meeting Without Walls Group has their own subscription for \$70 per year (as a nonprofit and part of FA). They have offered use of their GoToMeeting service to other groups to use from 6pm to 12pm ET, if not being used. She indicated that many groups may be able to get a similar rate by indicating that they are a nonprofit and part of FA.
- Someone asked via chat anonymously if FA makes a profit from the sale of literature purchased / distributed by Groups. George indicated that FA makes a nominal profit from the sale of literature. It is one of our two revenue streams; the other is donations.

VIII. Election Results Report - Maria S, Credentials Committee Chair

- There were 33 votes tallied before the meeting; the Credentials Chair was asked to serve as proxy for 8 groups; there are 10 delegates at the ABM who voted today.
- Out of 51 ballots cast:
 - 49 voted “yes” to approve the Motion P-01.
 - 46 voted “yes” to approve the following Officer: Cindy C as Treasurer.
 - 46 voted “yes” to approve the following Board Members at Large (BMLs): Ann P, David M, Jeff S, Mike B.
 - 45 voted “yes” to approve the following BML: Chris Y.
 - 44 voted “yes” to approve the following BML: Marc B.
- As a result of the election, Motion P-01, and the slate of Officers and BMLs are all approved.

IX. Adjournment:

- Barbara S thanked everyone for their attendance. She again reminded the attendees that she would love to have them consider volunteering for the Board.
- She thanked Donna again for her tremendous service on behalf of herself, the Board, and the Fellowship.
- Motion to adjourn was made by Andy L; seconded by David M, voted on, and approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:04 pm EDT, following recitation of the Serenity Prayer.

Appendix 1

1st Credentials Committee Chair's report For ABM June 27, 2020

As of June 26, 2020: 235 groups have met the deadline to re-register and were eligible for voting.

As the Credentials Committee Chair, I collected:

17 FAvote emails

16 Mailed-in Ballots

8 Proxies for the Credentials Committee Chair to vote

41 collected votes (prior to ABM)

+ There are 10 Delegates at the ABM bringing the total to 51 votes.

According to the FA By-Laws :

24 votes needed to meet the quorum to do Business (10%) at the ABM

36 votes needed to meet the quorum to make the election of Officers and WSB Members valid (15%).

I hereby Certify that all quorums are met for the 2020 Annual Business Meeting.

Maria S.

2020 Credentials Committee Chair