

**Families Anonymous  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
October 17, 2020**

**INTRODUCTION**

- 1. Call to Order:** 2:05 EDT, by Barbara S, Chair
- 2. Roll Call:** by Maria on behalf of Christy, Secretary

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>WSB Role</u></b>	<b><u>Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Monthly Report</u></b>
Barbara S	Chair	P	W
Maria S	Vice Chair	P	W
Cindy C	Treasurer	P	W
Christy R	Secretary	E	E
Alan B	BMAL	LOA	E
Ann P	BMAL	P	W
Bob S	BMAL	P	W
Chris Y	BMAL	P	W
David M	BMAL	P	W
George R	BMAL	P	W
Helen L	BMAL	P	W
Jeff S	BMAL	P	W
Marc B	BMAL	P	W
Marcia C	BMAL	P	W
Mike B	BMAL	P	L
Odalys A	BMAL	E	E

Attendance Key: P=Present, A=Absent, E=Excused, LOA=Leave of Absence

Monthly Report Key: W= Submitted by deadline, L=Submitted after deadline,  
N=No report submitted, E=Excused for extenuating circumstances

**3. Acceptance of Published Agenda:**

- Barbara moved to accept the Agenda, Maria seconded, voted on and accepted.

**4. Tradition One:**

- Read by Bob: *“Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.”*

## **5. Approval of September WSB Minutes:**

- Maria moved to accept, David seconded, voted on and approved. Maria to distribute.

## **6. Approval of January 2020, February 2020, and July 2020 WSB Minutes:**

- Maria moved to accept, David seconded, voted on and approved. Maria to distribute.
- Maria had followed up with Christy who will be finalizing the minutes from May and June. Once these are done, we should be caught up.

## **7. Chair's Report:**

- There were no comments or questions concerning the Chair's Report.

## **8. Treasurer's Report:**

- Cindy provided the financial reports as part of her monthly report.
- For September, we are \$500 worse than budget. Revenue YTD is the biggest area of concern.
  - Donations, both group and individual, are better than what they were at this point last year. Individual donations are almost double. This is especially encouraging since many people are financially struggling during the pandemic. Donations are primarily being made via PayPal and Zelle. We cannot tell if they are being made in connection with virtual meetings.
  - Literature sales are approximately half of what they were at this point last year. Over the last 5 years, literature sales have been declining ~20% per year. Sales are down 93% since groups have not been meeting face to face. Individual sales are not making up the difference.
- There were no other comments or questions.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Committee**

SC-1 Public Information

SC-2 WSO

SC-3 Literature

SC-4 Serenity Messenger Newsletter

### **Chair**

Jeff S

Maria S

Ann P

Robert S

SC-5 Bylaws, Parliamentary	George R
SC-6 International Groups	Vince M
SC-7 Budget Committee	Cindy C
SC-8 Sponsorship	Helen L
SC-9 Group Outreach	Marcia C
SC-10 Financial Oversight	David M
SC-11 Technology	George R

- **SC-1 Public Information**

- So far, Jeff has received input about his proposed email blast communication from ~ 4 board members. He asked that others send their content suggestions to him via email. Jeff will put together the comments and then submit another proposal.

- **SC-2 WSO**

- Maria noted in her board report that she and Cindy had begun discussing the WSO lease which is due for renewal September 2021. Cindy had identified this as an opportunity to save money. Several items are under consideration and noted in the monthly report.
  - Ann questioned whether getting rid of the storage space (one of the items under consideration) was really an option since cartons of literature are stored there. It is also where boxes of records are retained. Maria indicated that this is still up for discussion; it was only a possible opportunity identified by Angel. Angel had suggested that if we get rid of older records in accordance with our retention policy, there may be room in the main office for the remainder.
  - Some additional suggestions from the Board:
    - David suggested investigating the use of an offsite records retention facility.
    - Barbara suggested we consider scanning the documents and retaining electronic copies, rather than physical ones.

Maria indicated that she will keep the board informed of lease discussions, and get their input prior to renewal negotiations. Angel has taken a video of the office space and sent it to Cindy and Maria. Maria can share it with the Board so they have a sense of the space involved.

- **SC-4 Serenity Messenger Newsletter**

- The next issue is slated to come out on time during the first week in November.
- Elizabeth will be resurrecting some articles from prior issues due to the lack of original submissions.

- Barbara suggested sending out an email blast asking for members to share their experiences during Covid. Bob agreed to follow up on this.

## **AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

<b><u>Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Chair</u></b>
AH-1 Convention Liaison	Barbara S
AH-2 Intergroup Support & Development	Marc B
AH-3 Document Review	Ann P
AH-4 Long Range Planning	Marc B
AH-5 Revenue Growth Task Force	Cindy C
AH-6 Virtual Meeting Format	Maria S

- **AH-6 Virtual Meeting Format**

- Maria had provided the Board with minutes from the group's last two joint meetings with the PI Committee. She highlighted the following items:
  - A recovery-related contacts database is being developed, based on one in use by the Roswell, GA group. This will help us create greater awareness of FA, without having to rely solely on Group Secretaries.
    - George indicated that PI had tried something similar many years ago. They had names of licensed recovery centers and other professional recovery contacts, including personal emails of medical directors.
    - George also suggested that we look into the commercial email management system used by Nicole for email blasts. This way they could become part of the FA list, and avoid redundancies with our "Big List." George volunteered to reach out to Nicole, look at the website, and forward the information to this group.
  - The group would like to create a list of experienced FA volunteers to whom Angel could refer callers for initial support / information (in the event that outreach efforts result in a large number of incoming calls).
  - We would like to do short video clips of FA members sharing their recovery stories. These could be posted on the website as well as other media. Discussions are at the initial stage.
  - The group would like involvement from a Board Member outside of North America.
    - Barbara agreed that it would be good to have international involvement.

- Helen has agreed to participate. Maria will forward to her the invitation for the next meeting.
- Jeff has received five responses so far as a result of the email blast asking for a Communications Specialist / PR volunteer. One of the individuals was from Mexico. Barbara asked that we inquire about the status of Mexico's National Service Board.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Alan B**

- Alan is currently on a leave of absence from the board. Barbara has spoken with him, and he would like to remain on the board. Board members should continue to copy Alan on emails.

**2. Pro Bono Representation of Families Anonymous, Inc. ("FAI") in Trademark and Copyright Registration Matters (October 2020) - Bob**

- **Motion:** FAI should sign the the retainer letter agreeing that McCarter & English, LLP ("McCarter") will represent FAI, on a pro bono basis, in certain trademark and copyright registration matters. A copy of the retainer letter was provided to the Board with Bob's monthly report.
- **Rationale:** It would be beneficial for FAI to federally register its principal trademarks FAMILIES ANONYMOUS and FA Stylized, and to obtain U.S. copyright registrations for its most important publications, because:
  - Federally registered marks benefit from statutory presumptions of validity and first use nationwide, which make it easier to enforce FAI's rights in the marks. The registrations will also block third parties from federally registering confusingly similar marks.
  - A principal benefit of owning registered copyrights in FAI's most profitable publications is the availability of "statutory damages," which means FAI wouldn't have to prove its losses, or the infringer's profits, once FAI shows an infringement had begun after the registrations issued. The court can award what it feels is fair, usually between \$750 and \$30,000 per work, but it may award as much as \$150,000 per work for "willful infringement." The availability of statutory damages makes it much easier, and far cheaper, to enforce FAI's rights of copyright in its original works.
  - If we accept the offered pro bono representation by McCarter, FAI will obtain those benefits at significantly reduced cost.

- **Feasibility:** Bob S is Of Counsel with McCarter & English, LLP (“McCarter”), his former law firm. McCarter has offered to represent FAI in these matters on a pro bono basis, pursuant to the terms of the retainer letter. Under those terms, FAI would not be charged any attorney or paralegal fees for their time spent preparing and prosecuting these applications. However, FAI will be responsible for paying the filing fees (now \$275 per mark per class for trademark registration applications and \$65 for each copyright application), plus any other disbursements.
- **Implementation:** If FAI becomes a McCarter pro bono client, Bob S will work with McCarter to identify the marks and works to be registered, and to supervise the application / registration process. Any additional matters (such as any action to prevent misuse of FAI’s marks by third parties) will require an additional retainer letter.
- **Cost:** Two trademark registrations, each in two classes, should be adequate to protect FAI. Six copyright registrations should also be adequate, for now, to protect FAI’s interests. FAI will be responsible for paying filing fees for the trademark and copyright registration applications, and for any other disbursements such as costs to prepare a drawing of the logo mark, or any trademark search fees. The costs break down as follows:
  - The filing fees for two trademark applications, each in two classes, would total \$1,100. Bob S will personally donate that amount to FAI.
  - The filing fees for six copyright registration applications is \$390 (\$65 per application).
  - Other disbursements and costs (such as trademark search fees, if any) should total approximately \$900 or less.
  - Because the representation will be pro bono, FAI will not be required to pay hourly fees for time spent by McCarter’s attorneys and/or paralegals in preparing and prosecuting the applications. This will be a substantial saving.
- The following points were made during discussion:
  - Bob would work with Ann to select the items for which copyright registrations should be filed. Currently TABW and a few other marks are registered.
  - Copyrights are national; many other countries recognize US copyright law.
  - Bob summarized the benefits of registering trademarks and copyrights.
  - This retainer letter does not get us free work on any adverse actions; that would require another retainer letter.
  - Cindy asked about renewal fees. Bob summarized the initial and renewal costs. There is a \$425 cost every ten years for renewal of registration for each class filed.
- **Motion made by Bob, seconded by George, voted on and approved.**

### 3. **MOTION LC-1 (October 2020)**

- **Motion:** The Literature Committee moves that the WSB approve the attached #5013 *Avoiding Four Destructive Forces*.
- **Rationale:**
  - This piece was created in 2008 and was in need of revising and updating.
  - The WSB has already reviewed this revision. All WSB comments were favorable, and no changes were needed.
- **Feasibility:** This piece is ready to be printed.
- **Implementation:** Upon WSB approval of this motion, the Literature Committee shall:
  - proof and polish this piece, as appropriate, before sending it to the printer
  - ask the treasurer for a purchase order, send a press-quality PDF to the printer, and monitor the production of this job
  - modify the description of this piece in the literature catalog to reflect the new edition
  - ask the WSO to send a scan of the published front cover to the website manager for uploading to the e-store.
- The following discussion took place:
  - Cindy questioned whether we should be updating literature while sales are down and we are struggling to sell any inventory.
  - Ann indicated that we would be ordering a small number and discarding the old ones once received. The old piece was printed in 2008; it has the old logo, the old address, and is obsolete.
  - Marcia felt that it is important to keep our literature up to date.
  - Ann said that typically, when the LC has a new piece, it is spotlighted in the Serenity Messenger and an e-mail blast is sent out. There is usually a surge in orders and then it dies down.
  - Jeff felt that the focus should be on growing membership and getting the word out. He understood the need for updating the literature piece but questioned whether anybody would be buying it right now. He suggested putting the brakes on updating literature until we get past the pandemic. He felt that if there was an important piece that needed updating, we consider putting it as a pdf on line. Ann indicated that if we put pieces on line as a pdf, we lose our intellectual property and potential income.
  - Bob suggested focusing new publications on those needed for growing new members.
  - Chris suggested that we could approve the update of this piece and place the order on hold. Ann said that would require us to amend the motion.
  - Barbara suggested we think about how much effort should be placed on updating pieces, vs work on new titles. Ann shared that the LC is working on new titles.

- **Following discussion, it was agreed to put the motion on hold until the next meeting.** Ann will provide the board with costs associated with this motion.

**TABLED ITEMS: None**

## **CLOSING**

### **1. Announcements and Other Items:**

- Barbara has seen people selling TABW on Amazon, usually for a lot more money. She asked whether we should consider selling TABW there.
  - Ann indicated that she had discussed this with Cindy and George, and they decided against it for a number of reasons:
    - We would not be able to include an order form or other FA materials in the shipment. This would prevent us from creating greater awareness of FA.
    - As soon as we fulfill the order, we would need to delete the contact information; we would not be able to further reach out to the customer.
    - The profit is incredibly small.
    - Amazon would determine the shipping cost, which might be less than our actual cost to ship.
- Ann found that when doing a Google search for Today a Better Way, there appeared to be a glitch in bringing up FA as a seller. Although it brings you to the e-store, it says “product not available.” George will do some research with the Tech Com and reach out to Maxx Potential. Also, FA doesn’t show up first in the search. Suggested for consideration are:
  - Does the word “a” in Today a Better Way cause a problem?
  - Is “TABW” listed as a product tag for Today a Better Way?
  - Are the parentheses around TABW in the tags causing the issue?
  - Look at tags / meta tags associated with TABW.
  - Prove to Amazon that we are the primary producer for TABW.George mentioned that each search engine works a little differently. He also felt that most people interested in purchasing TABW would go to the FA website rather than Amazon.

### **2. Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn was made by David, seconded by Helen, voted on and passed (3:45 pm EDT).

### **3. Closed with the Serenity Prayer**