

Tammie opened the meeting at 10:00 am. which was held via online video conference (zoom platform).

The group recited the Serenity Prayer  
34 people attending at start, up to 43 later.

Purpose of today's meeting: To look over past couple years and determine what has been working, and what we can do better in future in order to fulfill our primary purpose.

### **Reports:**

Area Chair — Tammie

There is a new service tool kit app available to download.

We need a literature chair — tell Tammie if interested.

Newsletter — Cathy has offered to produce Nov and Dec issues; in past were combined.

New zoom option — recent 5.0 update

breakout rooms open — can choose which room to go to

Will be open at end of meeting

Delegate — Tad

NERAASA 2021 registration is open — link is on website. \$21 registration fee

Eastern forum on Dec 5 — registration is open. See [aa.org](http://aa.org) to register. Encourage early registration. Allowed for 3,000 people. Encourages people to register.

Secretary — Louise

Offered October minutes for approval; were approved.

Alt Treasurer — Kate

Meeting schedule flyer is at printer. Expect this week. Will contact DCMs for distribution.

Audit committee — Don S

Dave S, Bill W, Adam and Don S met to review 2019 expenses. There were no irregularities.

There were some issues with reporting Area delegate and area chair expenses. Lump sums are confused. Fixed going forward

Many committee chairs are not submitting expenses, which is a long-standing concern. Please report expenses to allow for budgeting.

Expense allocations — sharing room and travel expenses get misaligned.

Need documentation for actual mileage — could be map print out.

Also documentation for expenses — Submit receipts, ez pass, or bank account statement.

Tammie asked that this be summarized to be included in Newsletter.

Tammie welcomed guests:

Laura B, Area 19 Alt Chair Chicago and delegate elect

Ken T facilitator, Alt Delegate area 45, Southern NJ, panel 70

**Ken T** — facilitator

Rich H, Area Delegate is here

Ken introduced himself with sobriety date, home group Atlantic City young group; service position as Panel 70 alt delegate. Ken shared his personal story.

Tammie — welcomed visitors Randy J from Southern NJ and Rich.

Echoed encouraging workshops

The meeting opened for sharing by the group assembled.

There was a meeting break at about 11:17 am for 1/2 hour.

Meeting resumed at 11:48 am

Tammie announced we will be going into breakout rooms

Posted questions

Tim resumed the lead as facilitator.

Read opening purpose: examine how well area performs primary purpose. Inventory only, no actions. Area shall later decide what actions to take, if any.

Attendees were divided into groups in breakout rooms to discuss **inventory questions**:

1. Considering Concept I, "the final responsibility and the ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship", (the A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority ...), do the groups in Area 48 have everything they need to carry out this responsibility, do they have an informed group conscience? If not, how could Area 48 support and provide what they need?
2. Does the current agenda, format and scheduling of the Area 48 Assembly effectively address communication and the business to be conducted? If not, how can Area 48 more effectively communicate and conduct our spiritual business?
3. How are the steps, traditions and concepts guiding our decisions and actions when we conduct business at assemblies?
4. Is Area 48 attracting Trusted Servants from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community, including Young People, Minorities, LGBTQ members, and others?
5. How is Area 48 using voluntary contributions to provide services to the groups in our Area, is it meeting thinned for our Primary Purpose? Do our members understand where their contributions are being used and why? How can we better inform them?
6. If you could change one thing in Area 48, what would it be? Same question for all of A.A.

Reports back:

Tara for one group:

1. Was a limited knowledge of concepts. Role of sponsor in introducing people to traditions and concepts. Many districts are reading concepts at meetings to keep traditions and concepts front of mind. Call for more workshops. Suggestion that area trusted servants go out, but up to groups to invite. Comment that over decades there have been high and low engagement periods; cyclical. Need to remind people and groups about their responsibility to AA as a whole. Go back to groups and ask GSRs what area should be doing.
2. Area is doing a good job communicating including using technology. Difficult to get feedback from group now during pandemic.
3. Much less tension/fights at Area meetings shows traditions in use at meetings. Suggestion to explain process to help newcomers know what to expect so less confusing which can be off-putting. Some view it as chaotic; some like passion. Area makes newcomers welcome by greeting publicly and giving materials. Sponsor role is important in helping to prepare AAs for assemblies. Some view assemblies as politics; be good example of how AAs work. Let people know that we will help them perform service.
4. Doing better on a whole re diversity. Populations missing. One LGBTQ meeting started when there was a need. Suggestion to reach out through PI/CPC to reach these communities. Some

communities would prefer to not use AA; they employ church or family units. Perhaps engage at group level and being welcoming and nonjudgmental. Tammie had previously shared a diversity reading. Be aware of language used and avoid derogatory terms.

5. Can do better in explaining where area money goes. Can use visuals such as pie charts to provide information.

Cathy P for second group:

11 participants.

1. Overall Area is doing good job of sharing information. Attendance at area events is low and should be made more attractive. Some thought too much information. Provide condensed version of information. Conference material should be condensed when presented. Visitor loved area website.
2. Flyer is short, sweet and attractive. Too much to do in area meetings due to time constraints. People use personal email addresses. Format in scheduling can be improved of alternating Saturdays and Sundays. Don't read everything at meetings since proposals are shared in advance.
3. Sometimes minutia, politics, personalities. Sometimes parliamentarian is uncertain how to proceed. Good job staying on task at assemblies. Steps, traditions and concepts should be discussed at meeting. Weave traditions and concepts into proposals. Many do not understand right of decision. Many are versed in traditions and concepts.
4. Limited in demographics. Very few people of color and light on young people. Very homogenous membership.
5. Not sure that we do provide services to groups. Money made available to districts is good. We do not spend money on grassroots level. How we use money is getting worse.
6. We do not have enough people reaching newcomers. How to increase participation. Suggest delegates limit sharing. GSRs are the soul of service structure and need to be involved.

Cindy for third group:

1. Consensus that groups have what they need. Challenge is regarding informed group conscience. GSRs do not participate. Suggestions: need GSRs to communicate better with groups — maybe website should include more links to communicate directly with AAers. Many are unwilling. Suggest PI/CPC visit more district meetings. Maybe before voting assembly set up discussion rooms prior to actual voting assembly.
  2. Where is GSR? Is up to members to get GSR to do job. It is on each of us to make service attractive. GSRs and committee chairs often do not attend district meetings. Contempt prior to investigation. Need to work harder at setting example of importance of service. Area and district chairs need to attend group meetings to facilitate communication. There is an attitude that districts and areas can not dictate to groups; but they are just suggestions. Discussing proposals before assembly day — maybe less discussion at actual voting day — agenda was too full. Limit agenda though recognize we are in flux. Area check-in monthly meetings are great; maybe do this for GSRs. One group has message group for members. Limit use of acronyms and abbreviations; confusing. Some started “bring a friend” to district meetings; monthly giveaways. Keep spiritual principles in play. Consensus that voting assembly ran well.
- We are not attracting different backgrounds but this is not a diverse area. Maybe need more outreach. Increase in activity by young people. Convention showed signs of improvement. Changed decisions on not printing meeting list. Members do not understand how contributions are being spent.
- Change — inclusiveness and divisiveness of the past.

Tammie asked whether attendees have suggestions on how to proceed.

Ken resumed lead.

Question is who are we not reaching and how to use resources to get to them?

Reach out to communities and ask them to participate in events. Service events are not attractive — add fun component whether picnic, dance or game. GSO people are available as well as past delegates, regional trustees and trustees at large to come speak at events. There is a wealth of enthusiasm and experience. Add food and music once we open back up. Focus on carrying message of service lays on district.

Diversity — add on website: second language speaker and contact for accessibility chair. Ask old-timer from group to speak; encourages group members to attend district event.

Ken praised the collection of inventory responses.

Tammie opened discussion to all.

Comment that home group celebrated group anniversary. Former member who moved away provided concert. Was a lovely event. Improved attendance. Can be done on zoom!

Comment on homogeneity of Area. Important to talk about and can be uncomfortable. Look at ways to be more actively inclusive; do more outreach. Young people feel that general service is not for them, which is a shame. Important to continue this conversation.

Could consider hybrid Area meetings for the future. Took in-person meetings for granted. Need to get out and do outreach in communities even if uncomfortable. Important to show AA is here and what we do.

We have reached out to minority populations but they do not show up to the Area. We have talked about this in the past. Suspect lone ranger operations among minority populations; want to support them if they would come in and tell us what they are doing.

We have a significant hispanic community, and black people. Language barrier is an issue. We have to continue to reach out to diversify and bring them into the fold. Do this one person at a time. Need to focus on more than we do now.

Sometimes in joking we refer to ourselves as service geeks; how we refer to ourselves sets ourselves apart. We need to carry message. Next sick and suffering alcoholic can be of any characteristic.

Frustrating when people do not step up to service readily. Never saying no to AA is not a prevalent message. Asking to do service should get a “yes” — it is how we stay sober. Enthusiasm and way we act and speak can make service attractive. It begins with us.

Tammie reported on what she heard:

That we have a lot of individual work to do in representing service.

Area can host monthly GSR workshop; will give it some thought as to how to do this. Inclusivity outreach ad hoc committee could present on this. Contact Tammie if interested in this. Question whether this falls under Accessibilities.

Tammie has ideas on how to make service meetings fun and is open to suggestions.

Hybrid assemblies — an ad hoc committee made suggestions on this; they are continuing to meet. Formulating plan on how to go hybrid; expect proposal in May.

Other comments:

Bring someone with you to service; pass it on.  
Share our experience in service when we qualify. Do the action and let god bring the results.  
Spread message of how we love service.

Concern that in service we are becoming apathetic in carrying the message. Some meetings and districts are going dark. People want sobriety but hard to attract people to service. We have been talking about this challenge for decades. Seems to more difficult to attract people now. No ready answer for this. Without service work AA will die — we will not attract people to fellowship and membership has been stagnant.

Real issue in getting people to do service is fear. This keeps us stuck, but being involved in service gets us over fear. Useful to share this benefit of service — ability to grow.  
Perhaps we could have concept workshop at area level, since concepts guide service.

It is discouraging to hear people at area events complain and whine about people not doing service. There are a myriad of ways for each of us to do service; we can only change ourselves. Service is the 12th step, including area service. Suggestion to ask an individual person in person to do something.

Tammie announced that the next Area meeting will be in January — Orientation Day.  
Wants to put fun event in Orientation Day.

Motion made and seconded to adjourn meeting.  
After group recited Responsibility Pledge, meeting ended at 2:19 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Louise R.  
Area 48 Secretary