KNOWLEDGE BASED DECISION MAKING

Topic: Information Technology Chair Job Description

- To develop a job description for the Information Technology Chair for the Handbook.
- To examine what the specific duties would be
- Determine if there is a need to have a paid position as well as a team of people to oversee both AWSC and Assembly Meetings

FRAMING: BACKGROUND INFORMATION: What we know:

Historical perspective: As shown below, IT

> Section XI A – 7 Special Standing Committee of **Web Master** is listed
> Section XI B – 7 **Web Master Description and Guidelines**
> A committee will be put together, comprised of members from all of the Host Districts in Ohio, to formulate a plan to **develop an Area website that will contain meeting lists, Al-Anon Information Service office addresses and phone numbers and any other information which will help provide up-to-date information** to members of Al-Anon and others. (motion 2001/10 - # 4)
>
> Section IX J **Website**
> 1. A budget item of three-hundred dollars ($300.00) to be approved to establish the website for www.ohioal-anon.org. This money will go towards the coverage of expenses, such as web hosting fees and domain name registration. (motion 2002/05 - # 6)
> 2. In addition, establish a domain name of www.ohioalanon.org to be linked to the current website, www.ohioal-anon.org. (motion 2016/11 - # 06)
>
> SECTION XIV – EXPENSES & MOTIONS In addition to the Delegate's Equalized Expense fund, as described in the Al-Anon / Alateen Service Manual, **the Area Treasurer will be responsible** for the following, per Budget Committee recommendations:
> Part E-3
> 8. Establish a one-thousand, five-hundred-dollar ($1,500.00) **Equipment Fund** for maintenance, repair, and eventual replacement of equipment. (motion 1994/03 - # 2)
>   a. Add five percent (5%) annually in the budget, based on previous year income.
>   b. Cap the Equipment Fund at three-thousand, five hundred dollars ($3,500.00). (motion 2003/05 - # 5)
>
> Note:
> - The Ohio Convention details makes no mention of IT
> - The Ohio Spring Assembly and Two Day Fall make no mention of IT details although historically IT provides onsite support of equipment, projection, and other technical areas.

Existing Motions that appertain to this topic: None

What do we know about our member's or prospective member's wants, needs, and preferences that are relevant to this discussion?

Currently scope of the Web Master in the Handbook focusses on listing meetings online and "any other information which will help such as service office addresses".

Our member's needs are best seen in the areas in which the website has expanded:

Area handbook
current and archived AWSC Minutes
current and archived Delegate Reports
current and archived Al-A-Notes
forms to subscribe to Al-A-Note

WSO Guidelines (including 14 links to allow easy access to specific guidelines)

The entire Service Manual plus links to brochures and pamphlets related to service,

Links Public Outreach resources, GR packets, service forms.

The website also offers the ability to make contributions online (in both US$ and CA$)

The website contains a newcomers page filled with information, plus links to other pages for: spouse/partner, child, parent, sibling, grandchild in home, friend.

The opening page contains links for: more information, a self-quiz and a special section for teens.

Additionally, while the Treasurer reimburses current webmaster for equipment expenses, there is quite a bit of Area-owed equipment including: laptops, printers, projectors and power connections. Additionally there are software licenses residing on both Area hardware and member hardware which need to tracked, renewed and controlled.

The webmaster maintains a list of generic email addresses so that mail can be sent to generic "secretary" address which then forwards mail to specific person.

The website includes an area calendar with the ability to add an event to calendar right from the webpage.

The management of all of these areas of technology – both responding to requests and making suggestions for use of new technology - is quite a responsibility in and of itself.

Support of these areas is another burden of responsibility.

What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?

The strategic position of the Area
- Considering internal matters, recent technology and social environment changes have sparked a revolutionized in the ability of people from across the area to participate in meetings together in committees, convention and assemblies.

- Considering external matters, the reach of Ohio Al-Anon now easily goes beyond our state borders and surrounding areas and includes banks, etc.
- Keep in mind that the ways in which technology connects our Area, the districts within our Area, WSO, and financial institutions will continue to evolve – in many cases by entities outside of our control (WSO, banks, etc)
- The way in which our members will connect to us will also evolve – younger members use Facebook, Instagram, etc. How can these capabilities be leveraged and controlled? Think about new apps for smart phones. Who would have foreseen an Al-Anon app?

The capabilities of IT in the Ohio Area: the current area is maintained by handful of people – primarily two.

What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

The responsibilities and capabilities of IT in the Ohio Area has grown organically (a little bit at a time) and explosively.

We run the risk of burning out these resources and / or having what we've built begin to break. Many organizations and even businesses exist for which website links do not work, posted information is outdated, licenses expire and inventory is lost.

We run the very real risk of losing IT environment if one or two people are no longer able to carry the load. Important to have systems documentation and cross training so our investment in the technology is not lost.

What are the ethical implications of our choices (pro and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply. Identify both pros and cons.

Traditions 7: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
COMMENT: We would never expect one member to shoulder excess responsibility for a group – whether it be related to finances, group leadership, or meeting set-up, etc. Do we want to continue in an environment where one or two people provide IT support for all of Area 44?

Tradition 8: Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
COMMENT: Clearly this is an area where "special workers" could be employed if approved by the Area.

Concept 10: Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
COMMENT: It is important that the handbook definition of website responsibilities match reality.

WHAT IS OFFERED BY THIS TASK FORCE:
A new definition of an IT Technology Chair:
- The definition is written to be understandable by the average member.
- The definition is as "technology-independent" as possible. That is, we refer to email (not gmail) and office tools such as spreadsheets (not Excel)
- The definition includes providing strategic direction and recommendations to Area 44.
- The definition describes the Chair as "providing for" rather than doing. This allows the Chair to delegate duties where applicable. The Chair's job is to see that responsibilities are met.
- The definition is kept at a high level with these divisions:
  - Introduction
  - Requirements
  - List of Duties
    - Technology Tools
    - Website
    - Equipment
    - Miscellaneous
- The definition refers to a Technical Procedures Manual which will hold all of the technical details relevant to the Area's IT.
- There is no recommendation regarding the use of outside resources on a pay-for-service basis. It would be the job of the IT Chair to make such recommendations to the Area for any such arrangement. Also, the need to hire resources will depend on the skills and availability of member or volunteer resources as well as the development of technology itself.

PROS:
- High level definition provides umbrella of duties, is understandable and covers all the bases.
- High level definition includes items such as strategic planning and recommendations to the Area
- Generic responsibilities ensure that handbook will not go out of date when technology changes.
- The IT Chair's responsibility to "provides for" grants authority to delegate where appropriate.
- Any use of outside resources would be decided by the Area.
- The use of outside resources could
  - ensure responsibilities are better met
  - increase expertise
  - provide backup to existing resources (that is people)

CONS:
- Effort to organize efforts in a new way requires time and effort which at this point places a burden on already strained resources.
- Delegation of duties may involve out-of-pocket cost.
- Plans and recommendations made by the IT Chair will change how this area is viewed and managed by Area 44, and change is hard.

What do we wish we knew, but don't?

In this area more than others, we are affected
- by changes outside of our control: development of technology (and the ways our membership and other sick and suffering use technology)
- by changes in WSO, its app and the way in which group records are maintained
- by changes in business partners such financial institutions through which we can receive donations.

The goal of the proposed Area Position Guideline is outline a position providing leadership and expertise. This will allow us to leverage technology to fulfill our responsibility as stated in our Declaration.

Questions and clarification- no timing at the mic

Need for a motion? If so, use the motion form provided by the Area Chairman

Presented By: