

	<p style="text-align: center;">AREA ASSEMBLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>2023 Emergency Assembly</i> Saturday, April 8, 2023</p>	<p>ZOOM: Meeting ID: 833 7053 3686 Passcode: 629487</p>
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MOTION:	Request NETA 65 area assembly to endorse the 2023 AA conference motion that has been presented by the Abilene, TX Happy Hour Group regarding censure and reorganization of the current AA board of trustees.
PRESENTER:	Andy W- GSR Postponed from Spring Area Assembly

DISCUSSION: GSB has decided not to forward this agenda item on due to it not meeting the timeline deadline of 9/15/2023. There is no caveat that the substance of an agenda item would bypass the deadline. We should assume, based on precedent, that it will be forwarded on to the agenda of the next GSC.

NEW MOTION: HAPPY HOUR GROUP SENT IN A WRITTEN REQUEST THAT THE AREA SUPPORT OUR DELEGATE IN TAKING THE LETTER/AGENDA ITEM TO THE CONFERENCE FLOOR AS A FLOOR MOTION.

A GSR has been in contact with Kevin Pryor, at the GSB. The GSB is forecasting a 33% increase in revenue on the 2023 budget, of which half of this increase comes from the price increase on literature, and half of this increase comes from an increase in unit sales (number of books sold)---it is likely that we will fall short on this revenue forecast because unit sales tend to decrease when prices increase. This artificially high revenue forecast on the 2023 budget, has given the GSB the greenlight to keep on spending, since operating expenses (salaries & overhead) are planned off of the revenue forecast. Kevin Pryor said it is likely there will be a 20% draw on the reserve fund in 2023 (\$2.4M). We still owe the reserve fund \$3.7M for draws made on it in 2020. That means we will owe the reserve fund \$6.1M at the end of 2023 if another \$2.4M draw is made on it in 2023. We need financial oversight, because the GSB is not managing the Fellowship's money well. We need outside help.

What is the difference between a reorganization of the board vs disapproving the slate of board members that we vote on every year at the GSC? Answer: We have 2 options- partial reorganization- choose certain members we don't want- and total reorganization- get rid of them all. We also have another option- when we get to conference- there is always an agenda item to approve the slate of board members as presented. If the conference doesn't approve it, at that moment, a process kicks off where members of the conference will get in touch with the chair of trustees nominating committee and get a list of all of the people who have interviewed to see who is still interested in a position on the board. Conference will create a new slate while at the conference. To approve or not approve the slate is an existing agenda item.

Point of order- Motion to remove the original motion from the table, as it will not be forwarded to the conference floor. We had a motion and a second. Original Motion is removed from the discussion.

Why was there a change in procedure? Usually this type of item would go through trustees nominating committee then moved on to the GSB. Answer: We weren't given any indication as to why. It is likely that they addressed it the way they thought they should, but didn't communicate why. Comments made that the lack of transparency leads to lack of understanding of intents and motives- why are decisions being made the way they are and why are we deviating from procedures. It makes lots of people feel uneasy.

Has the board lawyered up to protect themselves from answering questions from the body? Answer: Yes- the board has secured an attorney to develop a unified statement to the fellowship. The money used did require 7th tradition funds.

Concerns over finances, oversight, there's a lot we don't have information on – what was behind the forced resignation of the chair? We don't have a lot of information on the why behind all of this. Which players are on which side of the fence?

Are we asking to do all 4 actions listed in the original PAI/letter within the floor action? – the request from happy hour group was read out loud- it asks for the appeal and original letter to be presented- so that would include all 4 points.

Accepting a letter written by someone outside of the area- regardless of content or merits- how is that not breaking unity? Is this rabble rousing? Answer: The member who wrote the letter is active within her own area- NETA65 doesn't have an opinion, but it isn't for the area to determine, up to each individual group/person to determine as their own group conscience.

Full censure seems a bit extreme- is there a way for us to just ask for them be removed without censuring? Answer: The motion on the table is to forward the entire letter/agenda item onto the conference floor as floor action, which would include full censure.

The people on the slate of GSB members to be voted on- do we have the information- do we know who those people are? Do you as a delegate have the bios on all the alternates? Do we know who they will be? Or will the alternative slate be presented at the conference and new to you. – Answer: The board has not received a slate that includes the new board chair. Usually we would have this info, but were told it would be presented at conference. If conference chooses not to accept that slate- they will go back to the trustees nominating committee and receive the information on all the people who had initially applied.

Where is the slate on the agenda of the conference weekend? – Answer: We still don't have an agenda- Jim said it's kind of at random- so we have no idea when it might be.

Were all the board members there when the resignation was asked? – Answer: Rick has never heard that not everyone was there. However, there were a handful of trustees walking in to that meeting and had no idea that this was going to occur. It was premeditated, but not by the entire board.

Why do we not have the right of appeal on this matter of the forced resignation?- Answer: GROUPS do not have the right of appeal in this circumstance- however, conference members do. We ask the delegate to carry the right of appeal on our behalf to the conference.

It was shared that In 2007 we walked into the same thing- a lot of people will not be informed because their trustees will be withholding information. Bill N talked to Linda C, and feels it was sickening,

conversation was recorded by Bill but will not be released to the public. Wayne listened to it and asked Jimmy, and Jimmy said it happened the way Linda said it did. This wasn't even a scheduled formal meeting, it was a sharing session. In order to remove a trustee it takes ¾ vote in full session. The Minority report will be released by Josh E and we will all have access to this soon. The board has done this before, we applied pressure, by 2008 we got what we asked for. In 2009, slate was denied, trustees went back into session and worked until it was fixed. They have the opportunity to do the same thing at this conference.

Would this be a replacement vs reorg? – Answer: At the 71st GSC they approved a new process to reorg the board. It is technically called a reorganization.

Will Rick be voting no to the slate? – Answer: based upon all the info rick has been given by groups, emails, members, gsrs and communications from the board directly. Unless rick gets additional info that changes his mind- he would not approve the slate as presented.

Do we have the other delegates conscience? – Answer: Each regional trustee has been sharing different levels of info with their delegates- the pacific region has been fairly informed and is leaning toward not approving. Northeast region is leaning as well. SE region, the general sense is that the board has made a good decision, has not done anything they believe deserves scrutiny. Unsure how the actual votes will land. On April 6 they had a delegates only meeting- the question was asked about whether to invite Linda Chisem, the poll was split 50/50 of the 80 delegates who responded to the poll. As a result, they are having an additional delegates meeting on April 10th and Linda has been invited to share any information- those delegates that want to come and listen can and will.

The letter has merit, but why those 2 particular people when the decision was unanimous? – Answer: We do know that Kevin has done some things, Carolyn is a bully by hearsay. Rick said in a joint board meeting with the board- on January 28th Linda was approved as the chair. Less than 24 hrs later she was asked for her resignation. When I called for the vote I asked for a show of hands for everyone in support of Linda's resignation, hands went up, no count taken. No nays, they don't record abstentions. We don't know how many hands went up. He was specific in saying we did not count the hands.

Point made that The person who put all of this info together mentioned that it would be brought forth to their personal area's assembly – we haven't asked if it was presented or approved, Rick will find out and let us know. -ANSWER received in email later: "No, they didn't. For context: our Area rolls a little differently. We had a full, open discussion at last week's Assembly on the Trustee situation, lots of questions and comments very similar to those heard today, including potential solutions at the Conference and group level."

How many of the 6 points HH group brought up do we know to be substantiated- and how are the 2 trustees named connected? – ANSWER: There is concern that in that meeting on Jan 29th, there was a lack of spiritual principles in the room. There was a lack of love and tolerance, and a vast amount of hastiness. From the trustees, they believed that their dinner break before voting, was their definition of not acting in haste. We are trying to make sure none of us have pitchforks in our hands to be an angry mob. We are here to ensure that with as much info as we have at our fingertips, are we acting in the best interest of the fellowship as a whole?

Does a censure carry any real consequence or is it symbolic at best? ANSWER: Censure is nothing more than a slap on the hand, no consequences as Rick understands it. Keith said we need to make sure we aren't personally punitive. To some degree there are no direct consequences of a censure. It is

our highest form of saying “we are not ok with what you’re doing or way things are being handled” then the only step left after that would be a reorganization of the board. Statement made that reorg is a “nuclear” option and would have some consequences that would linger for some years.

New York Law- can we remove an entire board without having a replacement at the ready? Also non-profit boards of trustees are required to have total transparency- are these true statements? Putting pressure on the board? What does that mean? If the board took up this matter is that an allowable action by our policies and procedures? –Answer: NYS law yes that’s why we have resumes in the waiting, to approve a slate. Pressure on the board, power of the purse, withholding contributions to them groups can use. Not approving the slate, censure, reorgs, etc.

Comment made that One of the most significant pieces of info comes from the recording of the southwest regional delegates conference- Jimmy D said “as your interim GSB chair tonight I will assure you the GSB in and of itself cannot resolve it’s current problem.” (paraphrased) Jimmy D has a lot of experience and is qualified to know what’s taking place – Jimmy D has not stated whether he supports or not bc as the interim chair he must remain impartial.

Who approved the attorneys? Who is paying for them? – Answer: We don’t know who hired the attorney. Assuming the decision was made by the board. The attorney was hired by the board. The fee is 1000/hr. Fellowship is paying for that, 7th tradition contributions.

If we don’t approve the slate of board members does that mean we don’t approve the officers too? Answer: Historically, last time this happened They rejected the slate of trustees and everything else was brought to a grinding halt. If it’s rejected the other items would be held up to allow the trustees nominating committee to go back and fix the issue.

Meeting with delegates and GSB got cut short bc of translation- was there a report from the second meeting? Answer: Second meeting on March 31st- was a continuation of the first meeting bc it only got cut off bc of translation issue. Rick didn’t feel there was any additional information that came from the meeting that would be beneficial to the fellowship.

What was the mood of that meeting vs the first one? - Answer: 1st meeting had a very unsure feeling, the second meeting was different, there were more people who were not happy and upset and questions being restated and re-answered. The tone and tenor of the 2nd meeting was far more aggressive and a lot more concern being showed. There was a general feeling of distrust. Delegates questioning the board, level of distrust that we had to address. There was also a stronger sense of people/trustees needing to “toe the party line” and be unified to the statement crafted by the attorneys. Lots of reiteration of same statements. Had a meeting last week where a trustee came out and said she was sorry for what happened and that they had made a terrible mistake. Her honesty was well received.

Comment made Because the trustees lawyered up, separated themselves from the fellowship, created disunity. It’s all hurting the common welfare of AA as a whole. Without transparency, this whole situation is a he-said she-said kind of thing. Can we ask trustees individually what happened? - Answer: Yes, one of the things that can happen, at any point during conference, trustees can be brought into meetings for questions, but these are usually just related to agenda items.

Linda waived confidentiality in the letter she wrote, why cant that info be released to the fellowship? – April 10 meeting will be reported on by Rick. – Linda waived right to privacy, but the board said that other trustees were involved and thus had right to privacy.

One group decided unanimously to stop sending money – do we let them know? Answer: The power of the purse is a wonderful tool. How will the impact be known? If a group just stops sending money, it will not have as much impact if you don't also send a letter to the GSB. Any group that wants to stop sending money, follow that up with a letter to the board to let them know.

Can the fellowship hire our own attorney? What are we looking at? What if this goes to news/media? – Answer: Unsure about hiring attorney, but we need to all be aware of the need to not get drawn into public controversy.

Do class A trustees have a program? Are they in AI Anon? Answer: All trustees are encouraged to attend 1728 meeting. Designed to help them better understand the spiritual principles of our fellowship. Class A non alcoholic trustees are encouraged to have an alcoholic trustee "sponsor."

Is there a way for us to dispute attorneys fees? Yes: It is the triangle, submit letter to rick and he will get it to the board.

Questions are flashlights, not pitchforks. How do we tone this down? – Answer: we can ask questions and not cause disunity. Rick will ask all the hard questions with dignity, class, integrity and to not cause disunity in the fellowship.

Kevin is class A trustee, Linda is class B trustee, and Kevin did not formally present resignation to board.

Comment made Linda is holding emails- she was accused by Kevin of saying certain things, but Linda has emails disputing those assertions and she will release those. Linda served 6 years, has loads of professional experience, is not someone we pulled off of the street. Kevin's dishonesty has been on full display for everyone to see. It isn't a matter of opinion anymore.

Comment made by Rick that January board weekend, he showed up with his resignation ready to hand it in and deliver it. There were 2 other board members as well that did this. Was ready to tender it, because of that, had purchased a refundable airline ticket. Her walked into January board weekend expecting to turn in his resignation and walk out and leave.

Comment made We have to take responsibility as members that we as AA are not showing up on a regular basis, that's how we got here. The slate itself is going to be addressed whether we move this forward or not.

How do we address the transparency issue with finances? We can't keep going along with this. Can we ask them to stop spending money on things other than payroll and other necessary things? Answer: Put it in a letter/official communication. One of Linda's biggest challenges and concerns is oversight in our spending. We were spending beyond our means. Handful of projects that are happening that are being funded that may or may not be in the best interest of the fellowship. Concerns about transparency are big, while Linda was asking for transparency – it was within her right- and she got fired for it.

Comment made that Getting piecemeal information – is not good – we should wait for an official statement. Let the board do their job, they are our trusted servants. Feels it is harsh to censure and ask for resignation. Wait to make sure what we do is right. Too quick to be making decisions.

Is this a systemic issue or a problem of individuals? What potential solutions to it being a systemic issue? – Answer: We have been kicking the can for a while. The board cannot fix it self- we need to rely on a higher authority- the higher authority is the conference. There are a whole bunch of individual issues going on, but all can be addressed by the conference.

Statement by Rick that We have 85 final agenda items, regardless of what is going on with our trustees, his primary responsibility is to execute the business of AA via the 85 conference items and he will do this.

CLARITY GIVEN: WE ARE VOTING ON THE LATEST EMAIL THAT CAME BACK OUT FOR RICK TO TAKE THE MOTION THAT HH HAD ORIGINALLY PRESENTED, TO THE CONFERENCE AS A FLOOR ACTION.

Y WE SUPPORT RICK TO TAKE MOTION AS FLOOR ACTION

N WE DO NOT SUPPORT RICK TO TAKE MOTION AS FLOOR ACTION

VOTE: 99 for, 13 against.

OUTCOME: **MOTION PASSES.**

Minority Opinion:

A lot of reasons opposed- none of them have to do with merit, mostly have a problem that all of this has come about. Letter came from an outside area. Mostly, I trust my trusted servants. Doesn't think everything is happy and sunshine, no, but doesn't think Rick needs to be the one to read the letter. If Rick gets to the conference, and he feels it is necessary he will do it. We have hamstrung rick to do it even if he feels it isn't necessary.

Uncomfortable for calling for resignation when we haven't been given very specific information of what happened to be able to endorse and back it up. Letter is incendiary.

Feels it is hasty to be personally punitive and we're operating on hearsay. Clearly something is going on, however, we're voting to endorse the letter as a whole and not in part.

Feels the slate approval/disapproval will naturally happen – think some of this will naturally correct itself and happen.

Don't want to send Rick into the conference being hamstrung, knows when Rick hears additional information he will make the right decision for AA as a whole.

Group didn't believe there was enough information, that made it past the point of hearsay to make a decision on what was related to the letter. Believe that appointing a special master to reorganize the board lies outside the scope of the concepts, when Bill W asked for the GSC to be created, he made the GSB responsible to the delegates and to the groups. Delegates have always had a way to address issues with the board and in the past/other controversies, that the delegates did address that. Power resides in the delegates to address the board.

MOTION TO REVOTE SECONDED:

27 Y to revoke

59 N to revoke

MOTION CARRIES- ORIGINAL VOTE UPHOLD

Rick made a statement that he does not get mandated – informed but not instructed. We have informed him but he is not BOUND by our vote.