

Pittsburgh Area Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2011

Jodi, Steering Committee Chair, opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer. Jodi asked for a motion to approve the last Steering Committee Meeting minutes, January 2011. Motion was made, motion made not to accept them.

Joab N., S.C. Rep- Night Owls Group – oppose the paragraph in the last minutes;

“The second issue that came in was numerous reports in regards to the Back to Basics meeting. Several intergroup members attended this meeting over the quarter at various times. We did find that they are in violation of several AA traditions. The book that is being used is not approved A.A. literature. The contributions that are being collected and the wording for how the collection is distributed are also in violation of traditions as well. We are not debating the content of the book, but we cannot allow non-approved literature to function as an AA meeting. We found this group to be in violation of Traditions four, six, seven and ten. This being said we feel as an intergroup that it should not be listed in the meeting list or listed on the website, and will be removed. This will protect AA as a whole”.

Joab wanted a motion on the floor regarding this, Jodi, S.C. Chairwoman, stated he could make his motion after the reports were read.

Randy J.- S.C. rep- Three Rivers Group, oppose the minutes of the last meeting, regarding the paragraph; “Numerous complaints came in the 4th quarter in regards to the Onala Club. We looked into many of the issues, reviewed the NY guidelines, and have spent several meetings discussing the issues. The Onala Club is no longer considered an “Alcoholic Club”, and has chosen to separate and become a Recovery Club. This being said we have asked them to remove the Pittsburgh Area Central Office link from the website which they had it listed under “Affiliates”. He stated this is an outside issue and it should have not even been discussed.

Leo H. Intergroup member stated that the information was called into the office and they were passing it on to the Steering Committee Reps at the last meeting. That is why it was in the minutes.

S.C. Chair, Jodi, again asked if the minutes could be approved, motion made, seconded and passed. Jodi then introduced Justin L, Intergroup Chairman. Justin read his reports and then introduced the Intergroup members for their reports in the following order:

Justin L. - IG Chairman & PICPC:

PICPC report – no requests for this quarter

Leo H. – Metropolitan Meeting & Speaker Bureau Liaison:

Speaker Bureau report - 2 requests came into the office for speakers which were filled. Also a request came in for speakers for a ‘DUI Hotel’ who wanted speakers to come in, Leo talked to them and they did not have enough participation and will get back to Leo on this.

Metropolitan Meeting report – The co-chair was picked last Intergroup meeting, Rich H. Berkeley Hills Group.

Jim E. – Meeting Trouble Shooter & Co-Treasurer:

Meeting Trouble Shooter report – A brief review of the events leading to this report:

In the 4th quarter 2010, the central office received complaints from AA members that the Back to Basics group was using “non-conference” approved literature as the primary resource for conducting their meeting. Conference approval has the established standard for literature that is used as a primary resource for conducting a meeting in the Pittsburgh area. After investigating the issue, the facts were presented at 2011’s first quarterly steering committee meeting and the decision was reached to remove the Back to Basics group from the Pittsburgh AA meeting list.

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Since then the Central Office was contacted by a member of the Back to Basics group who expressed a willingness to conform to the established standard for Pittsburgh AA meetings and after speaking with the Intergroup Chairman an agreement was reached to resume listing the group in meeting lists and on the Pittsburgh AA web site.

Jim stated that he will have more on this in "New Business".

Lynn M. – 2011 Office Manager & Gratitude Liaison:

Ist quarter office activity report:

Office Hours:

There were 1,116 calls during office hours, 328 meeting booklets & pamphlets were mailed out, 52 12 step calls referred to AA Members.

Non office Hours:

There were 1,350 calls to the Answering Service, 162 calls were referred to Intergroup Members.

Frank S. – 2011 Treasurer & Christmas Party Liaison:

Treasurer's report – Frank went over the report and asked if there were any questions regarding the finances.

Christmas Party report – Co-chair was picked, Tess P., from the Beechview Group.

Leslie M. –2011 Banquet Liaison & Asst. Office Manager:

Banquet report - Banquet was last night, went very well, 620 tickets were sold.

Bill W.–2011 Newsletter, New Group, Group Communication & Website Liaison:

Website report –23 calls were referred to website from the office

New group & groups close report 1ST quarter – there were 7 closed groups and 4 new groups opened.

Nancy W. –2011 Co-Chair, Prison Liaison & 2012 Banquet

Ist Q Prison report – 8 members who are contacts for the various prisons received their allotment of \$100 of literature.

Ted G. – 2011 Answering Service Liaison & General Service Liaison:

General Service report – Ted stated he will be attending the next Area 60 meeting.

Intergroup reports were finished and Justin L., Intergroup Chairman asked if there were any questions regarding the reports. No questions. Joab N., S.C. rep, Night Owls Group made a motion for the following to be voted on:

The intergroup committee may not remove an active AA group from the meeting list, unless:

- The reasons for such an action are presented in writing to the steering committee meeting; and
- Each voting member has had time to approach his home group with the reasons for such an action; and
- Each member votes according to their homegroup's conscience at the next regularly scheduled meeting; and
- The proposal attains a 2/3 majority.

It was seconded and voted against this action. There was no more old business and Jodi S.C. Chair asked for old business to be closed, motion made seconded and closed.

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New Business:

Jim E., Meeting Trouble Shooter then read the following:

“About a month ago two intergroup members were contacted by other AA members who were concerned that the Back to Basics meeting was still being conducted, verbatim from the *Back to Basics* book - non-conference approved literature. Justin and I attended the March 22nd meeting for the Back to Basics group and observed the reports to be true. After the meeting, we identified ourselves to the group officers. They gave us an opportunity to discuss the concerns presented to the Central Office and also shared their opinions with us.

At the April 12th meeting of the intergroup, this issue was discussed at great length and after thorough consideration, the opinion reached last quarter was reconfirmed. At issue is not the content of the book – it is consistent with the text *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Instead we feel it is imperative that there be an easily defined standard by which literature to be used as the primary resource for a meeting either is or is not approved. This is to insure our singleness of purpose. The Pittsburgh area AA has long held that conference approval is that standard. We fear that making an exception to the rule would expose AA to a multitude of problems in the future. The question arises “at what point do we draw the line?”.

Furthermore who would be the arbiter of such decisions? Might they be prone to choosing personalities over principles? Opening the door to special-interest meetings would risk our singleness of purpose and threaten the unity of AA as a whole. Our primary purpose – to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers cannot be diluted. Lastly our traditions clearly state we ought never endorse any outside enterprises; the publisher of Back to Basics is an outside enterprise, we ought never endorse them.

In summary, although the contents of the Back to Basics book are consistent with *Alcoholics Anonymous*, it simply is not conference-approved literature. The Pittsburgh office of AA has long been the established conference approval as the standard as to whether or not literature can be used as the primary resource for an AA meeting. This standard protects the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. And although each group should be autonomous, we feel that including the Back to Basics group in the meeting list could affect other groups or AA as a whole. Therefore the intergroup recommends the Back to Basics group be removed from the Pittsburgh area AA meeting list”.

Jim then asked if there were any questions or comments. Susan H. and Randy J. from the Back to Basic group made statements on behalf of the meeting. Discussions from other Steering Committee reps were made and there was a motion on the floor to have the meeting removed. The motion was seconded and it was voted to remove the meeting from the Pittsburgh Area meeting list and website. (44 ayes, 6 nays)

Motion made to close New Business and end the meeting. Motion seconded and passed.

Meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.