

Minutes of the August 23, 2010 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Al-Anon Information Service Center, Austin, Texas

On August 23, 2010, a regular board meeting was held at the Information Service Center. The following persons were in attendance:

Kitty G,	AISC Paid Employee	(Non-Voting)
Pat E.	AISC Chairperson	(Non-Voting)
Charlie A.	Just for Today	(Non-Voting)
Cynthia B.	HillToppers	(Non-Voting)
Linda B.	Courage to Change	(Voting)
Paula H.	Anderson Mill AFG	(Voting)
Betty M.	HillToppers	(Voting)
Betsy W.	Serenity Trails	(Voting)
Jenny A.	Treasurer, Unity AFG-	(Non-Voting)
Cindy B.	Lake Tuesday Noon Group	(Voting)
Arlyle B.	Bee Cave Friday Group	(Voting)
Julie K.	JFT Downtown	(Voting)
Sissy S.	Independence AFG	(Voting)
Judy W.	Unity AFG	(Voting)
Christine A.	Westlake	(Voting)
Kay C.	3 C's Lakeway	(Voting)
Mary C	Steps to Freedom	(Voting)
Elizabeth M.	Bridge to Shore	(Voting)
Dianne S.	Courage to Change	(Voting)
Elaine D.	Northland AFG	(Voting)

- 1) Opening. The group held a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Pat E.
- 2) Introduction. Those attending introduced themselves and stated whether they were voting or non-voting participants.
- 3) Readings. The Al-Anon Preamble from HOW AL-ANON WORKS, FOR FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF ALCOHOLICS, The Twelve Traditions, The Twelve Concepts of Service, Al-Anon Warranties and a passage from Lois's Story as related in PATHS TO RECOVERY, Lois's story, was read by attendees.
- 4) Announcement of quorum: There were 20 people attending the meeting, 15 were voting members. That meets the quorum.
- 5) Reading of Minutes from the June meeting. The minutes were approved.

**Austin Al-Anon Information Center
Board Meeting
August 23, 2010**

Chairman's Report

This has been a very busy period and I would like to just highlight the most important events and pass along other information as a matter of communication to the groups.

First and most important is the air conditioning at the office, which was out for about two weeks. Kitty called the service people and we were told the compressor was out and needed to be replaced for approximately \$1,600 and the compressor was purchased about 2003. I was at the office when the repairman was there and wanted to check on the age as I felt it was not this old. The compressor has been replaced in 2006 for \$1,569 and in July, 2009 for \$1,589 (13 months). The company who repaired the ac in 2009 said the warranty was one year and this was 13 months. When the repairman came last Friday to install a new compressor, he found that the compressor was not bad only needed a booster kit due to the high demand by the hot temperature outside. The coils also need to be cleaned which he will do next week for \$70. The booster was approx, \$350. All in all, the repair turned out to be \$450 instead of \$1,600 for the compressor. The repair was completed last Friday and that is the reason for the Board Meeting postponement until tonight.

The next topic is our non-profit business package insurance. The policy does have \$10,000 crime but this covers employees only and the board and officers are not included. I have an application for Directors and Officers Liability Insurance. The minimum premium for Non-Profit D&O is around \$750 to \$800 per year should the Board feel that we need this coverage.

I have been working with treasurer, Jenny, and we have implemented several changes for check points and safe guards for the Info. Center. First, all checks written by treasurer require two signatures. Some months ago I went to the bank with Jenny and I was put on the signature card as well as access to the online banking. I have gone online to check the bank account and it has been set up for the bank to send me an email alert once a week to look at the balance and the activity on the account. At this time we only have the one checking account. As a safeguard on the payments made online, the treasurer will print out the bank statement at the end of each month and as chairman I will initial all of the online payments, which will act as the second signature on the check. Charlie, Kay and Heather have been working with Jenny on filling out the IRS forms online and helping train Jenny in this area. We have received no further payments from the former treasurer; only the \$1,850. I personally feel we should file charges but not prosecute. But we may be facing the expense of an attorney,

I would like to suggest that we produce a Procedure Manual for the Information Office which would consist of duties and procedures for each of the offices: Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Office Worker (paid employee), If this is written down, when we change officers, the duties are written down and there would be no lack of communication for what is expected and is the duty of each office. The By-Laws do not need to be changed unless they need to be amended and sent to the Secretary of State, The Procedure Manual could be changed to include any

Board Decision that is voted and passed at Board Meetings. I have checked with other Information Centers in the state and they use Procedure Manuals.

Next I would like to pass along information on our Austin Al-non Website, www.austinalanon.org This is paid every three years so the members of this Board have never had it come up. The web hosting services for Information Center expires September 16, 2010, We pay for three years at a time and save approximately \$3.00 per month for 36 months. The cost is \$250.20 for 3 years plus \$20.00 per year for our name: austinalanon.org and austinalanon.org; a total of \$310.20 every 3 years. One of the main functions of the website is to have meeting information online. John and Kitty work together to make the information as accurate as possible. However, we also get inquiries to the website at Info. which John passes along to us. We had one inquiry from a counselor at Austin Children's Shelter for abused children seeking Alateen information. I returned the email and the counselor called me. We have had one 17 year old teen attending Alateen for the past three weeks and she shared with a newcomer what the meeting meant to her, unconditional love and hope. Another inquiry came from a church in Pflugerville offering meeting space to Al-Anon as they had other 12 step programs meeting there. This information was passed along to our District Representative.

Last I would like to report that I am working with a fellow who helps non-profits to claim unclaimed property (money) from banks through the State Comptrollers Office. Currently I have seven accounts for Al-Anon and Alateen that they are unable to locate the owner in Texas. The accounts total about \$2,000. Being a non-profit Al-Anon office we are eligible to claim the money. I have all of our information and will work on this next week. He said it would take about three months before we get the money after we file so will keep you posted on the progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat E
Chairman of the Board

6) BUSINESS:

- **OLD BUSINESS:**

Audit committee's report:

Estimate of fees: The counter credit column includes 3 payments made by Previous treasurer. There was one bounced check. Literature payments are payments made to the WSO office from accounts that were not the Information Center. Current repayments does not include the 850.00 just received from Previous treasurer. The total amount paid thus far is 1, 850. Currently owed is 43, 500. Total owed \$41, 650 minus the 850 received so as far as of July 31. There was so much money moving back and forth. The committee worked hard to come up with these numbers. Kay, Charlie and Jenny came up with the current amount owed and they worked hard to come up with this number. Considering the amount of transactions, the three came up within \$30.00 difference among the three-committee members.

The group agreed to accept their total and thanked them for their hard work.

A motion was made for the board to accept the responsibility of accepting the penalties for bounced checks as they did not accurately review the records and simply accepted the treasurers' report in good faith. The motion passed with 1 opposed. The measure passed.

Group Conscious Reports

Paula-Anderson Mill AFG and reporting two groups-This has been an extremely difficult process. We studied the concepts and warranties, the consensus for Anderson Mill group seems to be that since their has been such little repayment made, they would like to see some type of legal proceedings take place. Anonymity should be kept. Faith AFG also said they would like to see legal proceedings as well as having Previous treasurer attend debtors anonymous. The decision was made with love to help this individual.

Julie-Just for Today Downtown Group-The group was upset and it was a lot to process. There was a lot of concern about balancing the traditions/principles and caring about the individual but feeling like she needed to be held accountable. Accountability was a really important issue and the money that was embezzled belonged to all of Alanon. They asked to make 3 motions: 1. We hire a bookkeeper. 2. Copies of cancelled checks are made available on the monthly reports. 3. Theft is reported to the proper authorities.

Sissy-Independence AFG-Anonymity is a spiritual principle and cannot be used as a legal basis to shield criminal behavior past or current. It is wise to note that Alanon Alateen meetings are not above the law. Members need to exercise care in sharing information that could require reporting to authorities. The group conscious recommends reporting to proper authorities. Discuss legality of accepting funds from past treasurer has concerns about future paying us back. There should be no further discussion with the previous treasurer. This group recommends hiring a bonded bookkeeper in the future.

Kay-Three C's- The letter of intent with the purpose of paying back, step 9, they felt that she should be allowed to pay the money back and that no punitive action be taken unless she did not follow through with the plan. They also felt that the amount set was too high and should be reset to make it more affordable. Because the board did not take any responsibility, it was really not all her fault. We should allow her to try and make her amends. They did not want to bring the Alanon name into public controversy. Several of the people had tried to collect money from people and it may be more costly with lawyer fees and perhaps we should just move on.

Elaine-Northland-We didn't do a group conscious

Elizabeth-Bridge to Shore-We had a couple of meetings, but earlier than last month. There are 3 things:

1. As members of Alanon, they wanted the person to be held accountable 2. The theft should be reported. 3. The funds were not just the board's funds, but belonged to all Alanon people. After the last meeting, people were disappointed but they were at peace with the decisions made by the board.

Betsy-3 group consciences about this. There was a lot of disbelief over the shock of the amount of money. They wanted to know what guidance we had received from WSO-do they understand the amount of money? We need to make a decision and report back to them. The group really is very concerned about the anonymity of the program. They didn't indicate whether to prosecute or not but would follow directives of WSO. Principles above personalities.

Pat-WSO was contacted and the Literature Depot has had embezzlement but nothing in this amount and they were shocked. We have to get back to them if we decide to prosecute for further guidance. The amount we had was our prudent reserve because we thought we were going to have to move. We are responsible for all repairs, plumbing, electricity, and everything, but the rent is very reasonable.

Linda-Courage to Change-We have had 2 group conscious, one person was all for not doing legal action that would draw into controversy, but after we talked about it that person came around. People were stunned about the amount and the bottom line was that if the treasurer would sign a note and we keep up with that, find out the statute of limitations for prosecution, and if she wasn't going to pay it back, then follow through with legal action.

Arlye-BeeCaves Group-It got very heated and they charged her with coming to the meeting and everyone in the group felt that it should be taken to the authorities. Alanon would not be mentioned, you take all the evidence and they go through all the information. We don't need an attorney; we just need a representative to take it to the authorities. They will keep the Alanon name out of it. A lot of people felt that they didn't want to donate further if no action is taken.

Cindy-None

Judy-Unity-People have approached her individually and have not had any group consciousness on this. There is a lot of disappointment. Individuals were saying they supported the board's decision either way.

Chris-Westlake-Group conscious meeting indicated that Alanon was a safe place and there was a lot of concern about sweeping it under the rug. Voted on were 1. Hoping that the information would have a group inventory and an official statement for all the groups explaining what had happened and safeguards for a vote of confidence for future contributions and 2. Hoping that there was a finance committee set up and that has happened 3. Theft is reported and that the authorities take it from there. We are trusted servants so they leave it to the board to vote.

Cindy-Tuesday Lakeway-This is my first meeting and we have not had a group conscious. Shouldn't we all have one before we take a vote.

Cynthia-Hilltoppers-Group conscious had lots of questions. Professionals should do the audit. The question of additional donations came up. Mixed emotions of whether to report the theft-some wanted to forgive and some wanted to report.

Mary-Steps to Freedom-They just wanted to know if she had made a payment or not and they are just concerned wanting additional information. Concerned to see if the Information Center would be asking for additional donations.

Comments:

- We can't believe the previous treasurer.
- Principles above Personality
- Previous treasurer said she took 20,000 and it was double that amount
- Original commitment was for 2000 per month and she hasn't paid us back as per her own agreement.
- Feel like we can't believe her.
- Board needs to take responsibility to getting answers.
- The total amount is 43,500. She has paid 1850 plus 800.00

Betty-A motion was made at the last meeting that Pat write a letter to Previous treasurer saying what the amount we were working with and that an official statement be made to all the groups.

Motion made by Arlyle: We take this embezzlement to the proper authorities. Second by Julie.

Discussion: Paula-I would like some assurance to know how that will be handled because it is her understanding that this becomes a public record and WSO can help us with this. My group would like to know how that process works. How can you report a crime and not have your name associated with it.

Arlyle: when you have a charity group and you take it to the police. They take a look at it, they can call us "group" they don't have to use our name. You take it to a detective in the police department; they take it to the DA. The DA decides who to pursue it. Everyone is concerned, but we have to live by the laws of the nation and of Austin and if we don't we are all part of our crime.

Sissy -Travis County, we went straight to the DA. My group was very adamant that if we don't take action that we will damage Alanon as a whole. This organization is important enough that we will not allow something like this to happen. Previous treasurer is a good friend of mine, and although I care about her, there has to be something out there to stop future actions.

We need to table this motion until we talk to our groups to see what actions they would like to see taken. It hasn't been but a few months ago when a non-profit group was all over the papers.

The statesman would not be interested in this as a newsworthy story because the Families First involved the executive director.

Elizabeth-She will discuss sit with an attorney to have some information.

Vote: Consensus is 2/3 or majority. At the time of the vote, there were 14 people present.

A motion to take it to the proper authorities: In favor: 10 Against 3 Abstain 1

The motion passes.

Special Finance Committee on Safeguards:

1. Hire a part time bookkeeper to manage the finances. Treasurer will oversee the work.

2. Run a background check on the bookkeeper and get references from previous employers.
3. Institute financial controls on a monthly and/or bi-monthly: quick books, prepare bimonthly reports for the board, audits to review the bookkeepers work, bank statements and general ledgers should be examined. Look at expenditures and receipts to see if they match, 2 signatures on each check, the bookkeeper can not write checks to themselves.
4. Electronic transfers from checking to savings should only be done by the chairperson. The bookkeeper will not have the ability to transfer funds from one account to another.
5. More than one person should have access to online banking with others checking and email alerts for withdrawals.
6. Written instructions for every board positions. Bookkeepers: timetable for paying payroll taxes, timetable for paying employees. For example the financial report should end with a set date and be reconciled.
7. Treasurer should include cash flow statement.
8. Ceiling of funds 20,000 of one year operating expenses. Additional accumulated funds should be transferred to long term CDs
9. Information should purchase a small on-line computer for use of the bookkeeper, Kitty, and volunteers, with quick book and inventory being completed on the computer.

Motion: Paula-That we hire a bonded bookkeeper. Second: _____

Discussion:

- It would be probably about 10 hours per month
- Vote of confidence from other members
- Prevent this from occurring future problems

Members present during the vote: 12 In Favor: 12

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR:

Reminder that election of officers is coming up in December. We need volunteers. Pat has served two years and cannot be the chair per our bylaws. One more board meeting and elections in December. Member of Alanon for two years and not a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Respectfully Submitted by Margaret B., Secretary,