

Trustee Line – Current Issue

May 2021

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Thoughts From The Trustees – Current and Past

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The subjects listed below are themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them, or start an entirely new subject

Submit an item to the Trustee Line

You can click this text to send your item to the Trustee Line. After doing so, you should receive a confirming email that your item has been received and should be posted to the current issue.

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Subjects that receive submissions from at least 13 different people, will trigger an email blast to all the current and past Trustees, signifying a ‘Hot Topic Alert’ on the Trustee Line.

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1. We Can't Do A Virtual BOT Meeting. Really

5/12/21 – 3:35pm

It really does stretch credibility that we were collectively unable to conduct a Board of Trustee meeting on Zoom. Every other organization (including other 12 Step Programs and those without super tech savvy people) that I am familiar with has been able to figure this out, but GA is so special and unique that we decided it makes more sense to wait another three months and then have everyone travel to Orlando instead. Really?

If it required some modifications to our Guidance Code or normal way of operating to hold the meeting virtually, just explain those and allow the Board to vote (as we did on determining the location of the August Meeting) on whether we would temporarily accept those modifications. If the Board voted to accept the modifications, we could then hold the virtual meeting however it made the most sense.

Voting on agenda items could be done in a number of ways. If we couldn't figure out how to do it safely in Zoom, just create new e-mail accounts for every agenda item and have the trustees send e-mails to those accounts with the words "Yes" or "No" in the subject line. Allow 5 minutes for them to do this. This doesn't have to be rocket science.

Truthfully I think going forward at least half of our BOT meetings should be virtual. Requiring members to travel is a significant hardship on smaller and more remote areas and invariably favors the east coast. Virtual meetings are much more likely to attract new and younger trustees as well as those from outside North America. Also, surely the expense of these meetings and the travel could be better spent carrying the message to the suffering gamblers. I really hope that the first priority of the next executive board will be to make most of the future BOT meetings virtual – irrespective of the status of COVID.

Chris N. – Trustee – Area 2 – California

5/12/21 – 6:26pm

Chris, it's very nice what you are saying. I agree, a virtual meeting would be great. What's the big deal? Why can't we do it?

I will tell you my experience, as it is all I have to go on. Emails were sent out to over 200 people in both February and April. Both of those emails were asking, practically begging, for help to prepare a virtual meeting. The same virtual meeting so many Trustees, both current and past are seemingly wanting.

What was the response to those emails? SILENCE. There were only a few people, out of over 200 that were emailed, and potentially many more that were made aware as news spread of the need, that reached out to try and help.

An excerpt from our Combo Book, page 10 states, "3. Immaturity. A desire to have all the good things in life without any great effort on their part seems the common character pattern of compulsive gamblers."

Perhaps this experience I share, and this excerpt explain why we aren't able to put on a virtual meeting. Of course, several people exclaimed, after it was too late of course, that they could have done it, or they would have helped, but only a few were willing to try and do the work that it took.

If you or anyone in the fellowship wants to have virtual meetings, than I implore each of you to follow Page 17, number 5, and "...Get involved and be of service"

I hope virtual meetings can be a reality, and perhaps then we can send more money to ISO to keep our fellowship alive, instead of using it to travel to meetings. But until that time, we, as a Board of Trustees, needs to either "get involved and be of service" or perhaps step aside and let other members serve as Trustees who may be more willing to.

Mike R. – Trustee – Area 6A – North/Central Florida

5/14/21 – 10:00 AM

Chris, the statement you made concerning our BOT meetings are more oriented to east coast, can you back that up with one facts?

Nan V. – Trustee Area 13A – Maryland

5/14/21 - 10:45 AM

Nan, I am not Chris, but I went back to the last 20 physical Trustee Meetings.

Of those meetings I found the following:

East Coast - 8

West Coast - 6

Central USA - 3

International - 3

Also, planned but canceled due to COVID were Seattle, WA (West Coast) and San Diego, CA (West Coast) conferences.

So I am not sure, either, and would like to know, where the basis for that statement comes from.

Mike R. - Trustee - Area 6A - North/Central Florida

5/15/21 - 10:04pm

Mike - Thank you for doing the research on past Trustee meeting locations and educating me. I was honestly surprised. My comment was just based on personal anecdotal observations. Also, my experience was that the international and Midwest locations tended to be more accessible to the east coast.

I should also add that I don't generally have any major issues with the trustee meeting locations. It is just as much of a hardship for east coast folks to come out west. The solution to all of these travel challenges is virtual meetings!

Chris N. - Trustee - Area 2 - California

5/20/21 - 9:24pm

I understand what Chris N. was trying to explain and with all respect to Mike R. Mike is perhaps one of the most dedicated GA members who work his recovery and give back greatly. I should include all of the web committee members. In my 24 plus years in our fellowship, the current web committee is one of the best.

Covid-19 has shown how ill-prepared we were and still are after 16 months. The attempt and idea that we could pull off a BOT Zoom meeting with a month's notice had very little chance of success. We didn't even have a meeting of the minds between the BOT and the executive board on how to run the meeting without breaking the GC and Rules and Procedure.

I am not sure what or why there was a feeling that the BOT Zoom could not happen one week prior. Maybe if we started the process back in January, it could have worked. Perhaps if we tried for June and July, we could?

Two Austrian national meetings had over a dozen meeting rooms and 100's speakers. Also, many countries had 24-hour international marathons with hundreds of speakers. We could have reached out for their help to perform the BOT meeting. All I am saying is that we have seen it can be done.

Chris's other point about saving GA money should be seriously considered. Especially that there have not been any physical meetings for over a year and donations all deficient. The rooms and intergroup are being asked to pay for its trustees to send them to Florida. Does that sound a bit inconsiderate to the members after we have been relying on Zoom meetings for over a year, and the members see that BOT is going on another vacation?

So how much does it cost our intergroup? I believe the average total cost would be between \$500 to \$700 per with around 100 trustees, or \$50,000 to \$70,000. To work on an agenda that is over a year old for two days. That breaks down to \$25,000 - \$35,000 per day. Think about that, would you take that amount out of your personal or business bank account?

Very concerned about how we make our decisions. The Executive Board should do Step 4 and send it out to the members for review.

H.O.W.

Gary S. - Past Trustee - Area 12 - New Jersey

5/24/21 - 12:04pm

Gary,

Once again you speak without the benefit of all the facts. Did you reach out to anyone on the Executive Board as to why the decision to cancel the zoom meeting occurred? Choosing to go away from the zoom meeting for the BOT meeting was not an easy decision for the Executive Board.

Months ago Andy reached out to the BOT and others for assistance to run this. As was

previously stated, there were crickets. I was part of the trial run on using this platform for the trustee meeting. Based on our needs it wasn't feasible to use zoom when it came to issues like voting. It was a logistical nightmare. A BOT meeting is more than just members getting up and speaking. Zoom meetings may be great for speaker meetings, but there is more to a BOT meeting than talking. Trustee meetings are not vacations. Real work gets done. I take offense when a member states it's a vacation. How a trustee chooses to spend their time before or after the trustee meeting isn't my business, or really anyone's.

But the issue here is that just because zoom is good for speaker meetings doesn't mean it's good for a BOT meeting. The trial run that we participated in showed the flaws and limitations we were facing, even beyond the breaking of the Guidance Code and Rules and Procedures. Maybe one day we can get to virtual trustee meetings. But it would require more than just the Executive Board stepping up. It would require multiple people, with different levels of expertise. As it states on page 17 of the Combo Book, as Mike stated, "Get involved and be of service."

Pete K. – 2nd Co-Chair, BOT – Area 13B – New Jersey