

Hello Everyone!

We held a General Service Board meeting on June 11, 2014. What follows are brief minutes of the meeting.

Attendees:

- Jill from Syracuse, NY
- Shirley from Medway, MA
- Vanessa from Longwood, FL
- Annette from Phoenix, AZ
- Trish from DelRay Beach, FL
- Suzy from Chico, CA
- Julie E from Longwood, FL
- Sara from Scranton, PA
- Rachel from Phoenix, AZ

We reviewed and approved minutes from our May 14th meeting.

We discussed action items from prior meetings:

- Vanessa sent a map of the States showing meetings. We will convert to using this at some point soon. <http://test.4eda.org/test/map.html>
- Efforts to consolidate logos did not occur due to other commitments.
- Shirley's scanner is down and she is was not able to send the sample flyer

We discussed issues with the Chatroom.

Initially, when we opened the Chatroom, we had set up the least restrictive site possible: anyone could post anytime, and no login was required. Soon after, spam and porn started showing up on the Chatroom. We tightened things up a bit, requiring a login, but allowing anyone to post at any time. Lately, several people have been dispensing inappropriate advice and commentary to newcomers seeking support in recovery on the Chatroom. We asked for volunteers to moderate the Chatroom during non-meeting times, but were unable to find coverage. We have had to ban email addresses after warnings to avoid providing unsolicited advice were ignored. We have had to do this with some individuals more than once, as they created new email addresses and logins. We moved to restrict posted comments to meeting times only, but have continued to allow logged-on members to IM each other during non-meeting times. GSB members and others have expressed concerns with permitting contact between logged on parties during non-meeting times: this truly may not serve newcomers very well at all. Our goal should be to encourage newcomers to attend meetings where they will find examples of recovery.

GSB members on the call discussed the following options and voted on these, going from most to least restrictive.

1. Close the Chatroom completely: other 12-step groups do not support online meetings.

This option was unanimously rejected.

2. Close down the chatroom except for meetings. Only moderators can IM others during meetings. No one can IM others during non-meeting times. Login required. (Most restrictive)

This option received two affirmative votes and six opposing votes.

3. Close down the chatroom except for meetings. All participants can IM each other during meetings. No one can IM others during non-meeting times. Login required.

This option received unanimous support except for the two members who preferred the more restrictive option. Advantages of this approach:

1. Members can exchange contact information (i.e. for sponsorship) that they might not want everyone in the meeting to have.
 2. Members are encouraged to attend online meetings since that is when people are able to connect.
4. Status Quo: people can post to the chatroom only during meetings, but can IM others who may be online at the same time during and between meetings. Login required.

This option received unanimous opposition. Reasons cited for opposition included:

1. Enabling non-meeting communication between EDA members (or others) is not the stated purposed of the General Service Board. Social Media such as the EDA Facebook can be used for that purpose. The option to enable communication only during meeting times better supports the aims of EDA and the General Service Board to provide hope of recovery to newcomers.
 2. There is evidently significant risk that newcomers will encounter individuals who are unlikely to provide positive support for recovery during non-meeting times.
5. Leave chatroom open during meeting and non-meeting times for people to post. Let people IM each other during meeting and non-meeting times. Login required.

This option was not voted on since a less restrictive option was rejected for being not restrictive enough. Please see discussion above for issues experienced with this configuration.

6. Leave chatroom open during meeting and non-meeting times for people to post. Let people IM each other during meeting and non-meeting times. Login not required. (Least restrictive)

This option was not voted on since a less restrictive option was rejected for being not restrictive enough. Please see discussion above for issues experienced with this configuration.

What is the process for vetting moderators for online meetings?

GSB members voted on and unanimous approved the following process:

- 1) Existing moderators should encourage meeting participants to lead online meetings
- 2) Moderators should watch as others who are interested in moderating meetings actually lead them
- 3) When ready, existing moderators can submit names and email addresses to the GSB webmaster, who can add new moderators.

Webmaster Vanessa suggested that moderators clear the Chatroom and post the message: "The Online Meeting Room is closed except during posted meeting times" before logging off after each meeting.

Julie E volunteered to help with Chatroom Moderator Management, and Webmaster Vanessa offered to train Julie to support this function.

Anyone with moderator privileges can moderate any meeting. It is very helpful to have two moderators at large online meetings since one person can respond to posted comments where all can see, while another can privately IM meeting participants who are discourteous, to keep things on track.

Action Item: Vanessa will remove two online meeting listings that are no longer supported by moderators: Wednesdays @ 5:30pm (6:30pm EDT) and Saturdays @ 12:00pm NOON (1:00pm EDT)

Action Item: It was suggested that the "Chatroom" be renamed something more like "Online Meetings" to prevent confusion. Vanessa volunteered to make the change, which is not a trivial one since a new image has to be created for the Online Meetings tab, and every page in the website needs to be updated to reflect the changed label and image.

There are currently three active moderators (Brianne, Sara and Julie) and two others (Chair and Webmaster) who have moderator privileges. Suzy, Jill and Shirley all volunteered to act as backups for the remaining three meetings.

We discussed EDA Logos and Flyers.

- Due to the distractions of Chatroom issues, Vanessa was not able to pull information together for review
- Sara offered to review the existing logos as she has professional expertise that could help

Content for a new flyer aimed at newcomers without 12-Step experience was approved at our May General Service Board meeting. We reviewed several options for naming the brochure, and all agreed that "Are you new to 12-Step Programs?" would serve as the title.

Action Item: Annette volunteered to post the new flyer "Are you new to 12-Step Programs?" to the publications page before our next meeting.

We adjourned the meeting at 6:58 PM MST. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, July 9, 2014.

Please send these minutes to members of your group if your group maintains an email contact list!

Thank you to all who attended and to all who serve EDA!
Best regards,
Annette (aka Michelle)