

Motion to be made at the November 14, 2020 SENY Assembly: That SENY support this proposed agenda item for submission as a request for a final agenda item for the 71st GSC: The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous will implement a ten-year trial period alternating face to face with virtual General Service Conferences, to commence after current hotel contractual obligations are met.

In 2020, in the epicenter of, and at the height of the pandemic, the General Service Conference (GSC) conducted much of the business of AA in 4 days, instead of the usual 7, at a Conference which was planned in 6 weeks instead of 12 months, with GSO closed, instead of open, with staff working at home without their GSO desks, equipment, and other resources, instead of at the Office. What might we be able to do on a virtual GSC in a week, with an optional extra day for hospitality and meetings, and planning done over the course of a year, with GSO operating more fully, in the new normal? What might we be able to save of contributions (“sacred basket dollars”)? Would a wider diversity of members become available to serve as Conference members?

Recurrent themes heard by the Area 49 delegate from other delegates at the first virtual GSC (2020) were: 1) there was not enough time for discussion to develop an informed conscience on the Conference floor and 2) use of a virtual platform for Conference Committees serves AA well. If Conference Committees are able to meet ahead of the GSC for some of their work, as was done in 2020, and a virtual GSC was 7 days, it seems that robust discussion of agenda items will occur. One day before the GSC start may be incorporated to be used optionally as it was in the face to face Conferences to foster fellowship amongst Conference members.

While we understand there are concerns about this proposal, we trust that the General Service Board and GSO will take these issues into consideration when building a proposed solution that meets the needs of A.A. as a whole.

The primary motives of this agenda item are financial responsibility, and, accessibility.

Financial responsibility: For the ten-year trial period, estimated potential savings are \$3,563,285.00 based on GSC travel, meal and accommodation expenses (this is likely underestimated, because of anticipated spend increases due to inflation and, higher prices resulting from supply chain interruptions/required cleaning procedures at hotels due to COVID-19). Please see the included spreadsheet for justification. The financial impact of annual face to face General Service Conference begs the question “Is this service really needed?”.

Accessibilities: Will virtual attendance make serving as a GSC member more attractive to some? Will we increase the diversity of those who make themselves available? Might it make the pool of well qualified applicants for positions at GSO more inclusive? What might the impact be for those with physical challenges, lifestyle, or any other conditions affecting travel? Might it be safer? Might we encourage a wider variety of delegates and trustees with current business experience? How might current business experience impact our application of Concept IX? IV? The overall health of AA? Which other Concepts will be better implemented? *How will this impact our Fellowship and our effectiveness in carrying our message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic?*

This proposed agenda item brings to mind how the General Service Conference itself started in 1951 as a five-year trial, to see if it would work, or, if would we “break AA”. A ten-year trial period will enable a robust sample size of all Conference members to weigh in on the assets and liabilities of in-person and virtual GSCs. Nine panels of delegates will have the benefit of attending one virtual, and one in person GSC. It will provide an informed conscience to make a sound assessment regarding how AA may move forward in this time of change.

What might we be able to save of Seventh Tradition contributions? Might a more diverse cross section of people be able to serve? We don’t know. Would we like to find out?

“The history of AA shows that whenever a great need arises, that need is always met. In this respect, I’m quite sure that our history will go on repeating itself.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., April 1958, “Guardian of AA—Our General Service Conference”, AA Grapevine

Submitted with loving respect, and a sense of duty, Jane E., Delegate, Panel 69 (2019-2020), Area 49, Southeastern NY, SENY

Travel, Meals and Accommodations for the General Service Conference		
Year	Spend	Data source
2015	\$ 760,706.00	GSC Final Report Consolidated Statement of Functional Expenses
2016	\$ 717,363.00	"
2017	\$ 514,730.00	"
2018	\$ 760,005.00	"
2019	\$ 810,481.00	Audited 2019 financials
5 year spend	\$ 3,563,285.00	
Average Annual Spend		\$ 712,657.00
Projected 10-year Savings-----		\$ 3,563,285.00