

**Families Anonymous
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors
September 18, 2021**

INTRODUCTION

1. **Call to Order:** 12:01 EDT, by Maria S, Chair
2. **Roll Call:** by Maria

<u>Name</u>	<u>WSB Role</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Monthly Report</u>
Maria S	Chair	P	W
Marcia C	Vice Chair	P	W
Cindy C	Treasurer	E	W
TBD	Secretary	NA	NA
Barbara S	BMAL	P	L
Ann P	BMAL	P	W
Bob S	BMAL	P	W
Chris Y	BMAL	P	L
Chris Z	BMAL	E	E
Clive W	BMAL	P	E
Greg C	BMAL	A	N
Helen L	BMAL	P	W
Jeff S	BMAL	P	L
Mike B	BMAL	P	L
Sara L	BMAL	P	N

Attendance Key: P=Present, A=Absent, E=Excused, LOA=Leave of Absence

Monthly Report Key: W= Submitted by deadline, L=Submitted after deadline, N=No report submitted, E=Excused for extenuating circumstances, LOA = Leave of Absence

3. Acceptance of Published Agenda:

- Barbara moved to accept the Agenda, Marcia seconded, voted on and accepted.

4. Tradition One:

- Read by Bob *“Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity.”*

5. Approval of August 2021 WSB Minutes:

- Mike moved to accept the August WSB Minutes, Bob seconded, voted on and approved. Maria to distribute.

6. Chair's Report:

- There were no comments or questions concerning the Chair's Report.

7. Treasurer's Report:

- Cindy provided the August monthly financial reports, as part of her monthly report.
- There were no comments or questions concerning the Treasurer's Report.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee

SC-1 Public Information

SC-2 WSO

SC-3 Literature

SC-4 Serenity Messenger Newsletter

SC-5 Bylaws, Parliamentary

SC-6 International Groups

SC-7 Budget Committee

SC-8 Sponsorship

SC-9 Group Outreach

SC-10 Financial Oversight

SC-11 Technology

Chair

Jeff S

Maria S

Ann P

Robert S

Barbara S

Helen L

Cindy C

Helen L

Marcia C

Greg C

Chris Y

- **SC-2 WSO**
 - Maria will begin the process of collecting feedback on our employees (Angel and Nicole) for their yearly performance reviews. Ann, Bob, Chris Y, and Marcia agreed to be feedback sources. Maria will send out performance feedback forms within the next few weeks. If anyone else would like to provide feedback they should let Maria know.
- **SC-11 Technology**

- Chris Y reported that our website may have been hacked. He and George are working with Maxx Potential on this. It should not impact our website or the running of our business.
- There were no other updates from the Committee Chairs, other than what was provided in their Board Reports.

AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
AH-1 Convention Liaison	Barbara S
AH-2 Intergroup Support & Development	TBD
AH-3 Document Review	Ann P
AH-4 Long Range Planning	Mike B
AH-5 Revenue Growth Task Force	Cindy C
AH-6 Virtual Meeting Format	Maria S
AH-7 Education	Marcia C

- **AH-7 Education**
 - Ann asked for clarification of the date for the first program. Maria indicated it would be in October: *The Gifts of the Spirit*.
- Other than the information provided in the monthly Board Reports, there were no additional updates from the Ad-Hoc Committee Chairs.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Update on Trademark Registrations Outside of the US (Bob S)

- Bob communicated with the NSBs of France, Spain, UK and Italy. Because of the tight timeline, we are unable to consider filing priority applications for the UK and EU. However, they are still considering whether to file applications in the future. Bob will keep the board members informed.
- Clive reported that this will be discussed at their next Board Meeting in the UK. Also, someone from their Service Board reached out to the UK trademark offices and there may be a way to register in the UK at a lower cost.

2. Help for the International Group Committee (ICG)

- Sara volunteered to help Helen and the ICG track translation requests.

- Maria will arrange a GoToMeeting with Ann, Helen, Sara and herself, to go over the process.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. MOTION LC1 (September 2021):

- **Motion:** The Literature Committee moves that the WSB approve the addition of the term “Families Anonymous™ FA™” to the *Serenity Medallion* (#3051).
- **Rationale:**
 - The purpose of this motion is to memorialize the board’s prior approval, via email, of the action proposed herein.
 - Inventory of this piece is low, and a new supply needs to be ordered.
 - The term “Families Anonymous™ FA™” will be added, in a very small but clear font, along the bottom curve of the medallion, probably on the “Serenity” side. Its purpose is to identify the medallion as a product of FA while not detracting from the design of the medallion.
 - This change has the potential to increase future sales:
 - When someone receives the current medallion, they can tell initially that it comes from FA because it is packaged with FA’s Serenity Prayer Card (#2008). That is, it is the packaging, and not the medallion itself, that identifies it as an FA product.
 - That identification is lost once the person removes the medallion from the packaging and starts using it.
 - If the person then wants to order more—or if someone else sees the medallion and wants to order it—there’s no indication on the medallion itself of where it came from or where to go to order it. This can be especially problematic when someone is given the medallion as a gift in the first place.
- **Feasibility:**
 - There will be no extra charge for making this change. The fabricator, which is the same as we used in 2013 and 2015, will be making a new mold anyway and has included the cost of the mold in the quote.
- **Implementation:**
 - The Literature Committee will review a proof of the medallion and approve it for production.
 - The Literature Committee will order 100 medallions.
 - The selling price of the medallions will need to be increased from \$5.00 to at least \$6.00 to cover the higher per-item cost of producing a smaller quantity. The per-item cost for the 500 medallions ordered in 2013 and again in 2015 was \$1.97. The per-item cost for the 100 medallions being ordered now is \$4.90.

- **Motion made by Ann, seconded by Jeff, voted on and approved.**

The Board then discussed the 1) the pros / cons of ordering more medallions at a lower cost and 2) increasing the selling price.

- There was agreement that the selling price should be increased. We would not want to have to increase the price again in the near future. A higher selling price would help guard against further increases in the unit cost we pay, or increases in production shipping costs.
- At a unit cost of \$4.90 for 100 medallions, a 50% to 60% markup would result in a selling price of \$7.50 to \$8.00. Marcia suggested a price of \$7.95; Jeff agreed that it would be psychologically more appealing than \$8.
- Spain ordered 90 in the past year; it's unclear if most of those remain in their inventory and therefore they would not be reordering more any time soon.
- Jeff has ordered medallions for his group; they are handed out as gifts when members reach a milestone, are struggling, or have a good share.
- For the next Serenity Messenger, the LC will be preparing an announcement suggesting that the medallions make nice holiday gifts for anyone in a recovery program. The announcement could also be sent as an email blast. By raising awareness, we would expect an increase in sales.
- The unit cost for ordering 200 medallions is \$3.30. The total difference in cost between ordering 200 medallions (at \$660) and 100 medallions (at \$490) would be \$170. At a \$7.95 selling price, we would earn \$3.05 vs \$4.65 per medallion if we order 100 vs 200.
- The board felt that an order of 200 medallions would be reasonable because of the decreased unit costs, and the plans to increase sales by highlighting the medallions in the Serenity Messenger and email blasts.
- Ann reminded the Board that Cindy is concerned about having things in inventory.
- Since Cindy's input is important, Maria asked if we needed to make a decision now. Ann indicated that we don't have a lot left and a purchase order has already been placed. From the time that we approve the proof, it will take ~3 weeks for them to be produced and shipped to the WSO. We would be unable to wait a month until the next WSB meeting.
- Jeff mentioned that Cindy should be reachable within the week. Ann will follow up with Cindy regarding the board's recommendation; she will do this ASAP since she would prefer not to wait a week.
- Maria suggested we make the motion to move ahead, contingent on Cindy's approval. If she's not in agreement, we would go ahead and order the 100.
- Bob volunteered to defray the cost with a \$100 donation if there is concern by Cindy about the board's recommendation.

- **Motion:** Ann, on behalf of the LC, moved that the WSB approve the order of 200 medallions at a cost of \$660 and that we sell them at a unit price of \$7.95. Motion seconded by Barbara, voted on and approved.

2. Group Outreach to New Groups Outside of the US and not covered by a National Service Board (NSB)

- Two individuals have recently reached out about starting groups in countries not covered by an NSB: Kenya and Serbia.
- The individual concerning Serbia would like to start a virtual online meeting. Ann is working with him on this; they are requesting permission to translate material in the starter kit.
- The cost for shipping materials to Kenya is ~\$40.
- In the US, starter kits are shipped to new groups for free; they are not charged shipping. Marcia suggested we could provide the starter kits for free, but charge shipping for groups outside the US and not covered by an NSB.
- Lots of material from the starter kit can be downloaded for free from our website. Ann suggested she could provide a list of those. Other items could be added for downloading. However, some material (such as #1004 *The Twelve Steps of FA*) would need to be shipped. It was suggested that we could provide the non-downloadable materials for free, but charge them for shipping.
- Marcia felt that we should offer them a choice: for example:
 - They could download available materials, and pay for shipping the rest, or
 - Pay for shipping of the complete starter kit. (Some people in countries with poor computer access may prefer this option.)
- Barbara suggested that to make it easier for them, we could send an email with a link to the electronic downloadable materials, or attach the files.
- Sara suggested that it may be best to have a conversation with them, particularly regarding the cost, because of different currencies.
- Ann will work with the LC to come up with a proposal for providing these countries with a starter kit, and share that with the board at our next meeting.

3. Expansion of “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) for FA website

- A new member of the Education Ad Hoc Committee (EC) had suggested that it would be helpful to have an FAQ for the FA website. The EC member volunteered to come up with a list of questions, based on her own experience as a relatively new FA member.
- After the EC meeting, Maria went to the website and saw that there was an FAQ section, under “About FA”. However, there were only 7 items in the FAQ.
- The board agreed that it would be beneficial to expand this area of the website.

- Barbara asked if someone is monitoring this section and whether the current set of FAQs are still relevant. Maria indicated that the FAQs seem to have been updated (i.e., there is a reference to virtual meetings).
- Chris Y will follow up with George after the meeting to determine who is the “owner” for this part of the website and report back.
- Maria will follow up with Angel, and ask her to compile a list of questions most frequently asked by callers to the WSO.
- Next Saturday, Maria will debrief the Education Committee about the board’s discussion.

4. PPG Documents Requiring Review / Update

- Maria reported that a number of our PPG documents are due for review and update.
- She will follow up off line via email with the owners of those documents.

4. Future of FA (Mike B).

- Prior to the meeting, Mike provided the board with two documents:
 - Presentation to be reviewed during the board meeting (see Appendix 1)
 - Sixty pages of supportive material.
 Mike thanked Cindy C and Greg C for their help in putting this material together.
- Mike reviewed his presentation slides and made the following additional comments:
 - In 4 years, at our current rate of declining revenue, we will run out of funds.
 - Mike’s experience is that the ability to donate on line has increased the amount of donations from his group.
 - The problem of addiction is growing. There should be more people looking for help.
 - People want information in a different way.
 - Many people prefer online meetings because they are convenient and time efficient.
 - We need to be approachable at a micro (i.e., group) and macro (i.e., WSO) level.
 - The recent education sessions support an image of caring and connectedness.
 - Our traditions are similar to those of other 12 step programs. Other programs have found a way to live with increased awareness, bordering on promotion.
 - Al-Anon has Public Service Announcements on TV and a presence on social media.
 - Al-Anon also has an app for phones.
 - There may be benefit in having meetings focused on siblings.
 - When FA was founded, some addictions (eg., to video gaming) did not exist.

- To be connected, we must be conversational: someone says something and we say something back in a place where it is likely to be received. Today, most people connect to others and the world via their cell phones. Texts are preferred since people like to receive information in small snippets.
- It is time to look at our traditions and have an honest discussion about how a changing world impacts our practice of them.
- Barbara made the distinction that promotion involves paying for something. Public service announcements are free and would be acceptable.
- Sara added that applications are usually adopted first in the US, and then in Europe. For example, Spain is 5 to 10 years behind the US in terms of technology. Most entities, public or private, have an application to share information and encourage participation.
- Chris said that we need to maximize the content of our webpage; we currently don't have that expertise. Barbara suggested that because technology will play such an important role moving forward, we send out another email blast asking for volunteers with the appropriate expertise to join the Technology Committee. We should also go back to our groups to seek this help.
- Clive found that the presentation, as it relates to a changing world, was relevant for the UK as well. The world is changing, and we'll likely have to change so as to not become irrelevant; particularly in how we share and consume information. He would like to share the presentation with the UK Service Board.
- Mike pointed out that his presentation is a strategic analysis rather than a strategic plan. We first need to accept the strategy before developing tactics.
- Jeff added that there are a lot of gray areas. If something makes us uncomfortable, we need to try and get past "this is how we've always done it", as long as we don't compromise our principles.
- Marcia suggested putting "info@familiesanonymous.org" on our homepage to make it easier for people to communicate with us. Most of the emails to GO are from individuals looking for information.
- Clive asked whether there would be an opportunity to reach out to other 12 step groups and build on what they've done in this area, rather than start from scratch. This could minimize costs, particularly around those associated with applications.
- Prior to our next meeting:
 - Mike will put together a matrix (speed of implementation vs impact) and suggest some concrete next steps using that analysis.
 - Board members should re-review the 60 pages of supportive material and forward any ideas, etc. to Mike so that he can incorporate them into his work. Mike will resend this out.
 - Board members should download the Al-Anon phone app, register, and see what they offer. This may trigger additional ideas.

- Board members all acknowledged the great job done by Mike, Cindy and Greg and thanked them for their work on this.

TABLED ITEMS: None

CLOSING

1. Announcements and Other Items:

- Bob spoke to Jon regarding his reservations about amending the Articles of Incorporation. Board members can reach out to Bob if they'd like more information.

2. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made by Barbara, seconded by Ann, voted on and passed (1:54 pm EDT).

3. Closed with the Serenity Prayer

Appendix 1

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

Long Range Planning

FAMILIES ANONYMOUS

LONG RANGE PLANNING

- Who we were
- Who we are
- Who we want to be
(until we need to change)

x

WHO WE WERE

- Collection of groups that met at a physical location
- Groups that sold printed literature at meetings
- Groups that received cash donations at meetings
- Groups of parents/spouses (predominately) that read newspapers and watched nightly news
- Desperate individuals searching for support and hope (renewal of spirit)
- World organization primarily relying on literature sales and convention revenue-sharing

x

WHO WE ARE

- Collection of groups that meet (in person / on line)
- Groups buying less literature
- Groups receiving donations
- Groups of people not reading newspapers and not watching nightly news
- World organization threatened by declining revenue
- Desperate individuals searching for support and hope (renewal of spirit)

x

WHO WE WANT TO BE

- Healthy organization that can survive and then thrive
- Responsive to needs of current / future members
- Guided to membership by
 - Availability
 - Approachability
 - Image of caring / concern
 - Image of being connected

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- **HEALTHY**
 - Focused on Good Objectives
 - Increased availability to population with different paths to us
 - Minimize expenses/optimize revenues
 - Provide helpful information/tools/lessons
 - Be "attractive"
- **THAT SURVIVES**
 - Have strong heartbeat
 - Strong financial outlook
 - Steady and consistent number of "hits"
- **AND THRIVES**
 - Feeling of growth
 - Increased demand for availability and resources

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE? (CONT-1)

- RESPONSIVE
 - Understand what's needed
 - Board availability
 - Distribute / deliver (education / information)
 - Project needs
 - Study / learn / test
 - Measure "take rate"
- ****CONTROVERSY****
 - When does awareness become promotion?

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE? (CONT-2)

- AVAILABILITY
 - Physical / virtual
 - Change in groups domains of membership
 - ✓ Example: Lafayette Hill FA becomes South East Pennsylvania FA
 - Reachable easily (email, chat, phone)
 - App? - many organizations increase availability this way

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE? (CONT-3)

- APPROACHABILITY
 - Attitude of:
 - Kindness
 - Openness
 - Concern
 - Strength
 - Support
 - Warmth
 - Results
 - Answer "doorbell"

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE? (CONT-4)

- IMAGE OF CARING/CONCERN
 - Listening organization
 - Publicize requests and actions taken
 - Deliver response

x

HOW DO WE GET THERE? (CONT-5)

- IMAGE OF BEING CONNECTED
 - Inform membership of caring initiatives

x