

# Serenity Group



# The Woodlands

## Group Conscience Meeting Agenda Monday, November 21st, 2022 ~ 7:10-7:50

### Meeting Opens – 7:10 PM with Welcome and Serenity Prayer

**Review of Minutes:** Copies available for review, both paper and on [www.serenitywoodlands.com](http://www.serenitywoodlands.com) and on the current Newsletter.

*Greg made a motion to accept the minutes, Crystal seconded the motion.*

### Group Reports: GSR limit to 5 minutes, others limit to 2 minutes, please

**GSR:** I wanted to look at our 11th tradition. So the traditions are for the groups what the steps are for the individual so I think it is important that we look at them. I only made 10 copies of this, do you guys mind sharing maybe? So the 11th tradition is our public relation policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. We need always remain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. And so it's talking about we are not a secret society, we do carry the message wherever we can but we have to be aware that we are not doing damage. I love the picture there of the guy on the camera with the microphone. It's talking about how to be anonymous on television, I'm not sure many of us have that opportunity. What we've learned this through trial and error, there were people that were very famous that - we have that today that are very famous talking about AA that are either for or against. So we just have to be really careful about that. There are a couple of questions that I would like to ask the group here about that. "Do I attract people with my recovery, would somebody want it without me yelling it or putting it on social media?" as a question. Anybody want to talk about that?

Ron: If you go to AA.org there are little video clips, it's maybe on the borderline of promotion but it's really not it's more informational for people who want to see something. The second point is when I first got here and FaceBook was really picking up and Bright Spots, I think Sue and some other people opened it. My experience with social media I was a little nervous about in the beginning, my anonymity. I found over 10+ years that FaceBook generally, especially the sobriety related groups, are generally respectful about maintaining anonymity, within those groups. There have only been a couple times I've seen something borderline concerned. I think people get it. Just my experience.

Kristi: That's really within AA. You're right, I think there are videos, they are trying to promote AA so people know that we are here, because we can be so secret that no one knows we are here, but at the same time not tooting our own horn about "not trying to go get people to come in because I'm so cool". Anyways, I wanted to start doing that were we look at a tradition. This is from the pamphlet "The twelve traditions illustrated", it really breaks it down real simple. Greg had asked me to come up with what the GSR expenses would be, thinkin about the year ahead. So, I got this from the AA service manual, this is just a suggestion. "Sometimes GSRs incur expenses traveling to and from service events. Weekend events may also incur expenses for accommodations and food. It is up to each group to decide whether it will reimburse its GSR for all or part of the travel expenses, but groups should keep in mind that an individual's finances should not be a barrier to service." This is expected that the GSRs will attend these things. You guys are very generous, this is a very generous group. Some groups do not support their GSRs doing this. This is looking at 2023 (see flyer attached to the minutes). Greg I'll give you this. It

# Serenity Group



# The Woodlands

would be about \$1250 for the year. I know on our budget, treasurer's report, there is a budget line for GSR but I don't think we have ever put aside funds like that. Greg I think that's a good idea, just give me an estimate to know what I'm thinking. I don't know if I need to make a motion later.

Greg: I've had it added to new business

.Kristi: I apologize, I meant to make copies for everyone. I did want to talk to this group about the district budget. There are around 30 groups in our district, there are about eight that contribute regularly. We are one of the top three contributors. I am your voice there at district, I want to make sure I am voting our group conscience there and being prudent with our funds. The Ad Hoc budget committee met, which I was a part of. Just as I am talking about the GRS expenses they have a DCM for our district who is expected to do those things. They send their DCM and the ALT DCM, that makes up about 40% of the budget. That seems really high to me, but I'm not against people getting to do those service opportunities. We had a district meeting yesterday and go to our groups and ask for their input, that was the major cost. It seemed like a large percentage of our budget, they did talk to other districts. It's like our group, if they are a rich district they don't think about it. We also are a rich district, our group is a major contributor. Just getting some feedback about that, we're not really voting on it, it's just I want a consensus. Or if you would tell me any concerns you have or you don't care, if we have the money, spend it.

Ron: GSR events?

Kristi: No, DCM or District Committee Member and their ALT. We contribute money towards the budget.

Crystal: If the money is there and everything is paid for, I would say do it.

Kristi: It's not counting the prudent

John: We decide to make a contribution, it's up to them to spend it

Kristi: We trust they will make the right decision

John: We hope they will

Ron: We aren't changing the percentage we are contributing? That's not what you're asking?

Kristi: We're not, no. We did not come to a consensus, whether the budget as presented would be accepted. We are voting on it in December.

Ron: You said the 40% one item was high

Kristi: That's 40% for the year for our district

Lauren: That's to send the GSR to one of the events

Kristi: No, DCM and ALT to all of the events

Lauren: Are they going to extra events, it's just expensive. So in 2021 the regional forum was virtual, so there were no expenses. I don't know this for sure, but I'm thinking that's why there are extra funds. Is because they didn't go that year. I don't know if the following year we'll have the money. It can be carried over to the next year, whatever is excess. I want to represent you guys at district voting how I think this group, but like John said, you are hoping that the district makes wise and prudent decisions about the funds.



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

Crystal: They are acting the way a group has to act, there's a prudent reserve, nobody should get rich, nobody should have too much extra money. For me, if it takes 40% and everything else is paid then you use it.

Kristi: Okay, anybody else.

Doug: I was on that budget committee last year for the district. There are line items, there is more than one at a group level because there are committee's involved. We have committee's also. Usually are committee's aren't funded for anything. That's a tedious, well thought out thing that happens every year and it is district level and groups don't really have a budget, that's up to the district.

Kristi: The district asked for the groups input

Doug: It's up to the group to decide how to spend what we want to spend on, the areas we want to spend on. As far as contributions, that's up to the group, this group gives 10% of our excess money to district 31, gives 50% to Intergroup and those can be changed. The thing of it is each group/s primary purpose is to elect a GSR representative to give our voice at district functions. And the district of course is to have a DCM and the area's primary function is to elect a delegate which goes to the general service conference each year to voice the area's concerns. And this stuff isn't cheap, but like you mentioned. I want to re-emphasize this so I'll be quiet. There should be no connection between someone's wealth and their willingness to serve.

Kristi: I agree with that totally. I was just asked to bring this to the group so I did.

Ron: Once that budget is finalized is there transparency or visibility?

Kristi: Yes

Ron: I don't know without looking at something like that, this year's vs. last year's. Would give me a better idea.

Kristi: The way we scheduled our Group Conscience, district is the day before. We are voting on it in December, so I should be able to bring it to December's Group Conscience.

**Treasurer's report:** Most of you in the room have a copy of the budget report in front of you, I think it is important that you do look at it as we go through.

Ron: I sent you a photo Kimberly, if you could share it online.

Greg: This is the treasurer's report month ending October 31st, 2022. Total basket collections for the month of October was \$6,818.75, you can see how it's broken down. \$5388.15 in cash, \$578 in checks, \$852.60 from Square. 85% was dispersed to SMCAF for rent, \$5,795.40. Leaving us a grand total of \$1,022.81 for distribution. What I need to point out, let's look at the literature fund first. So because we overspent last month, we started out the month with a -\$161.57 but this group is incredible. When we ask you to do something everyone steps up and they cover it, which is pretty incredible. Literature sales for October was \$417, which is about twice what it normally is. Red can was \$624.03, which is about three times what it usually is. We added the \$150 out of our distribution of funds leaving us a final literature restricted fund of \$1,029.46. Let me mention to you, the month of November is looking even better and catching up on some of these funds. The one thing that pushed us negative, which I'll bring up in new business. It was voted on at one of the previous GC meetings to cover the GSR expenses to the SWARSSA. We had agreed to cover the expenses for Kristi at that conference. We did cover those, there was a distribution to Kristi for \$970.57 which includes travel, hotel, plane and all that kind of stuff. YOU will see funds available for distribution was -\$97.76. I'm okay with that because we had to do what we had to do, this will all be rectified next month, once we redo the report. As we've heard we spend every bit of money that we have. The only money I retain in the account is \$6500 prudent reserve in any restricted funds. I just wanted to compliment the group for stepping up and contributing, also the green can for



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

prison literature was \$459.71 which is also an increase from previous months. Those negative numbers will be caught up in the month ending November. And I've got a couple of other things that I'll catch up on a little later. That is the treasurer's report, any questions?

Charlie: Just for clarity, there's negative numbers, fake numbers, we ignore those correct?

John: Yes

Greg: You can ignore them

John: They don't carry forward

Charlie: Those won't carry forward

John: It just means we don't have funds for distribution

Greg: What about the -\$161 on literature

Charlie: That's different, but I mean for the distribution. You don't have a formula to handle the negative distribution.

Greg: So it's month to month, not cumulative

John: Whatever is available month to month, if we don't have money than we don't distribute.

*John made a motion to accept the treasurer's report, Kristi seconded*

**Intergroup report:** Intergroup had put some signs up Dec. 10th 11:00am-3:00pm is going to have their annual open house, speaker and tax free book store. I was also made aware last week that Night Watch is going to take place Dec. 9th through Dec. 12th. I will not be taking on that responsibility. So I'm not sure, I'm working two of the three days and other engagements so I'm not sure since no one is underneath me or with me what needs to take place.

Charlie: That's the chair's duty, that's not you.

Ron: We need to coordinate the Night Watch effort for Serenity?

Lizzy: Correct

Ron: You're not going to be available to do that?

Lizzy: I'm not, last time I was available

Ron: Lizzy, what is the timing again?

Lizzy: I didn't want to do anything, I don't know. If someone's going to be able to take on that responsibility to start it as soon as possible if not I can call intergroup and let them know we are not able to participate at this time.

Ron: Do you remember the volume of calls we got in? Over 100 or less than 100?

Lizzy: More than 100

Ron: More than 100 for sure

Doug: I think Charlie alluded to the fact that if you ask our chairman who has done that before or our alt chairman they would be more than happy to.

Ron: Between Scott and I we will figure that out

Lizzy: And I'll help too



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

**Grapevine report:** Grapevine stuff is back here on the wall. It's Christmas time, giving someone that you don't know a Grapevine, anonymously, is probably the biggest gift anyone can give a recovering alcoholic. So I'm plugging selling Grapevine's this month.

Ron: How much is the annual subscription and is it online and the print?

Doug: That I would have to research. You can get a month, a year, the online stuff I'm not sure.

**PI report:** No Report

**SOT report:** SOT has undergone a few changes here recently. We have decided to drop our Noon meetings, we've also dropped the 10:00am Sunday meeting. We've been able to add closed captioning to our meetings online. Lastly, we are undertaking an initiative to have all of our hosts trained or refreshed by the end of the year. Going forward, we will make sure that hosts go through the training, getting everyone on the same page. We've also decided the host for Serenity online needs to have 6 months sobriety as well as a sponsor to be able to host a meeting. These are changes that we've implemented, as I've said before we did the implementation which is not fully effective until the beginning of the next month. We did have meetings in October, early October, to invite the Serenity online meeting community to listen to what we were potentially proposing and voting on, I think it was about 30 days later to follow up on that and take a vote and everything that I mentioned did pass. There have been some small changes made already, we were having trouble with noon meetings being covered with hosts and so we have removed the video icons from the website. Right now there is a video icon for Wed, Thur, Friday this week because we do have coverage for those days. I do have the updates made to AA.org to make sure the changes are cascaded down to make sure the changes are reflected in the Meeting Guide.

**Literature report:** Thank you all for letting me serve as Literature chairperson. When I first started doing it this year I tried to order the bare minimum of chips and books, it seemed that we ran out very quickly and I was always having to replenish it. Birthday night would come and we'd be missing the 6yr chips, it was hard to keep up with. So that last time when I spent so much money was just to go ahead and get a little extra on the chips. The chips really add up. I believe we pretty much have everything we need for a couple of months. We go through a lot of desire chips and we go through a lot of books. I saw in the minutes from last month we talked about, the question came up about the books that are leaving the shelves and if they are being paid for and we don't really have a way to check that. We just hope the honor system works so I don't have a solution for that. I know that when we ran low on Big Books, there've been a couple of times when they've been on back order and haven't been available and I got a lot of comments from people, Serenity members, they thought it was a terrible thing for us to not have the books on hand. They don't want to see the stock go down to just a few books, that we need to have the books available, blah blah blah, and I mean I agree. That's a question, how many books should we try to keep on hand? Is it your impression that people are stealing, or just taking a book for a newcomer and then not getting around to paying for it? I don't know what the solution should be going forward.

Vicki: I sent this finally to Crystal, there's an idea in a couple of pamphlets. Service work around the club, so if we had something greeters, other clubs have had greeters. If there was a person to stand by the books before and after meetings. It's just like people who mop and things like that, it pulls the club together, it gives people something to do and makes people feel part of the group, that's what the pamphlet said. That would be a thing to do to have somebody stand there and be sure books get back to where they need to be.

Laura: We just said we are one of the highest contributing clubs in our district, right? If books are flying off the shelves that means that somebody who might need a book might actually be reading one. I don't think it's that big of a deal, if a couple goes missing. Is it really that big of a deal? Or am I just looking at it all wrong.



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

Ron: Good point, a month ago it was a big deal because we were down on the funding. We made that effort, the work got around, this month it kind of went the other way and we are in reasonably good shape. There's just a concern off and on as the numbers go up and down, I think there is a time lag from when people pick up the book and when the money is dropped off. I agree with you that the important part is that we carry the message but the funding will probably continue like that which will probably be up and down unless we change the process to account for it. I'd rather people get books when they need books.

John: We've never enforced it, it's just one of those things. That's how we reach out more effectively than any other way.

Crystal: I've gotten a couple of calls that need more books for their meetings, they've put in a lot more money to the funds. I want to probably tell Ginny, yes and go ahead and get the books that we need now that our funds. Go ahead and get the books that we need that are missing on the shelves.

Ron: Ginny, did you hear that?

Ginny: I should be off work on Wednesday, I can do an inventory. Are we completely out?

Crystal: I'll text you with a picture

Ginny: They wanted to order some Living Sober books for the 6:30 meeting.

Crystal: All of the large prints are out

Ginny: What should I do? We don't want to wait another month? Do we want to buy more large print books?

Greg: The recommendation is to get what we need, by the time this invoice comes in we will have collected for November. We are in good shape. I panicked a little bit last month, but we are good.

## **Old Business:**

Ron: Greg you want to discuss

Greg: I made a motion, is it okay if I withdraw the motion? I withdraw the motion

Ron: The next motion was Casey's, is Casey here? This is for the candlelight meeting. We will defer that until next month

Ron: Kristi, Wednesday night 8:00pm

Kristi: Yes, I made a motion that it be an open discussion rather than it being a closed men's and closed women's meeting. We just don't have the numbers. I've had women show up expecting a women's meeting. I just want it to reflect what it really is.

Ron: You made a motion to post it a month ago, so now we can vote. If someone makes a motion to vote, correct?

Jessica: Discussion and then vote

Ron: Any discussion

Doug: The whole purpose of discussing this and posting it and people saying "why the hell are we doing this, what's the point". The whole point is that this group is really responsible for this thing called the Meeting Guide and the current meeting guide has two meetings on Wednesday night. So when we decide to change this, we make it official so GSR can notify the certain people that need to be involved to change the meeting guide so people don't show up thinking there's a women's meeting. That's to



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

eliminate any confusion as to why this Group Conscience is voting on this. Make is legal, I guess.

Ron: Any other questions on the motion or can somebody make a motion to vote. It's been posted.

Doug: You can call a vote

Ron: I make a motion to call a vote. The motion was that we make the Wednesday night 8:00pm meeting an open discussion meeting. We have to make sure the Meeting Guide and all other publications are updated accordingly as well as the board and so forth.

Ron: Yay 14 Nay 0

Ron: The effective date?

Kristi: This Wednesday

## **MOTION PASSES**

### **New Business:**

Greg: Based on Kristi's report. Kristi, thank you for the work you've done as GSR, I've been with the club for five years and I've never seen someone as involved and valuable to us as what you are doing right now. There has always been a GSR restricted funds column on our budget sheet. I've been treasurer for 2021 and 2022, there were no expenses for 2021 so we didn't fund it. I'm going to make a motion based on the estimates that Kristi forwarded that Serenity before distributions begin to put \$100 into a restricted fund for GSR expenses every month. I estimate it will probably vary \$500 give or take as the year progresses. That now gives us a base to build on for GSR expenses and I think it's my opinion that \$100 will be sufficient. If half way through the year if we need to change it we can do that. I'm sure that needs to be posted for 30 days.

Kristi: Let me just say, the Area assembly's I have not been staying at the hotels, but for the future somebody might want to do that. I just think it's good to have. It's down at the airport but I don't know, I might if it becomes that. Just trying to take everything into consideration for somebody new.

Ron: We can discuss that. Based on the comment earlier, this is a month to month basis this doesn't accrue into a fund that is available. It isn't accrued.

John: It's set aside before we do distribution

Greg: As restricted funds if approved

Doug: Second that motion

Ron: So we'll post it, see what discussion next month and vote possibly. Anything else, new business.

### **\*New Business Cont.**

Vicki: I ran it past Scott and he said it sounded like a good idea. If the webmaster responsibilities could be divided into two or more Serenity service positions. There could be a GC webmaster and an online meeting webmaster to get more people involved in doing service and because from what I know no one is interested in taking the job. It's a whole big chunk. Updating the website all of the time. It's not a motion someone can run with it if they think it's a good idea.

### **\*New Business Cont.**

Ted: I was in a meeting with a newcomer, relatively new to the area, he asked why we don't have an American Flag in our facility. I couldn't answer the question, I think it's a good idea to have an American flag in here.

Crystal: It's in our Preamble that we talk about politics and all of those other things.



# Serenity Group The Woodlands

Ted: Okay, the fact that we are in the United States of America.

Crystal: Good Question

Ron: It will be in the minutes, it can come back up for discussion in the next meeting.

Vicki: It sounds like a good thing for Kristi to take to Area and ask.

Ron: Ask what other clubs do.

## **\*New Business Cont.**

Doug: I keep hearing this, John knows it. The club is Alcoholic Anonymous, Serenity Group of The Woodlands is Alcoholics Anonymous. And the two are supposed to be separate, this meeting is not about the club, this meeting is about Serenity Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. I have to remind people what the difference is between the two things.

## **Close of meeting:**

Motion to close meeting made by Doug, seconded by Greg. Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer at 7:51 PM