The Maryland General Service Area Committee met virtually on September 26, 2020. The virtual doors opened at 8:45 a.m. for fellowship. Chairperson Lori M. opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. with the Serenity Prayer.

**SESSION ONE**

**Area Chair Opening Remarks:** Lori M. welcomed everyone to the virtual Area 29 Committee meeting, and she reviewed the procedures for participation in the virtual meeting. Following no objections, the audio only of this meeting was being recording for the Archives and to ensure accuracy of the minutes. 35 members were on the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

**Chairperson Report:** Lori M. reported that she attended the Finance Committee meeting, and 2021 proposed budget is being developed. Ray T., interim Registrar has decided to rotate into other service opportunities. Lori M. is looking for a new Area Registrar, if interested please contact her. Participated in a call with David R., MD State Convention Chair on the progress and challenges that are facing the 2021 MD State Convention. The Clarion Inn Hotel is very flexible on renegotiating the contact. Their deadlines are generous which provides us time to talk about the best way to precede. The hotel contact does not require signature till after next month’s Assembly and can be cancelled by December 24, 2020 without penalty. We will discuss this matter in detail today and again at the next Area Assembly, which give us time to make an informed decision. The Area Inventory is schedule virtually for October 17, 2020. Normally we have set questions, break into groups, and come back together to go over our results. This year, Lori M. would like to focus on these unprecedented times, where we are having difficulties meeting with other alcoholics in person since meetings, workshop, conferences, and other events have been canceled since March. Ask the questions: “What service can Area 29 provide to carry the message in these particular times?” All are welcome to attend.

**Secretary’s Report**: Craig T. provided a summary of the July 18, 2020 Area Committee Minutes, which were transmitted to the Assembly by email on September 1, 2020 and a revised copy on September 21. 2020.

***The Motion to accept the Minutes was made by Terry P. and seconded by Misty L. The motion was carried unanimously.***

**Treasurer’s Report:** Terry P. reported as August 29, 2020, account balances are: Operating Account: $28,395.10 with interest totaling $10,000.18. Special Savings for International Convention: $3,532.02.  Savings Account: $9,998.18. We have additional assets of Literature: $5,728.73 & Grapevine: $4,024.29.

Revenue:

Group Contributions as of Aug 29 are $18,776.82. Other income (i.e. 7th Traditions basket, lunch donations, etc.) total $5409.33. Total Revenue $24,186.15 which is 42% of our budgeted revenue for 2020. Note: This includes a bequeathment of $3,000.00 by Allen S. At this time last year MGS had received 74% of the 2019-budgeted revenue.

Expenses:

Through August 29, we have paid out a total of $22,411.37, which is 30% of our budgeted expenses this year.

At this time last year MGS had expended 72% of the 2019 budgeted expenses.

***Following Discussion, a Motion to accept the Treasurers Report was made by Frank M. and seconded by Craig T. The Motion was carried unanimously.***

**Alternate Delegate’s Report:**  Kurt W. reported his activities since July:

CARC Meetings – Reconvenes have been held virtually for all four CARC’s. Kurt W. thank JoAnn B., Jeanine W., Misty L., and Mary M. for stepping up as Leaders. He also thanked Don B., Linda J., Morgan J., Lori M., Nancy B., and Bob C. for their service as Mentors. There is one potential proposed conference agenda item from the CARC’s.

Mini-Conference 2021 –The initial planning session for the 2021 Mini-Conference was held August 31st.

NERD Meetings – Attends the monthly NERD business meetings, keeping abreast of activities.

Alt Delegate Meetings – Attends the weekly Northeast Region Alternate Delegates meeting. They share extensively on our experiences in service, current events, and much more. A combination recovery and information sharing meeting. They also had their first meeting encompassing all the US and Canada back on August 27th. 56 North American Alternate Delegates (NAAD’s) were present. The initial meeting mostly consisted of introductions.

Budgeting – Kurt submitted his budget request for 2021 to the Finance Committee.

Correspondence – Getting a lot of emails, texts, and phone calls. Keep them coming.

Upcoming Scheduled Activities include:

Proposed Conference Agenda Items – Two potential proposed conference agenda item with one from the CARC’s.

2021 Mini-Conference – The Mini-Conference Committee will be meeting virtually on September 28, 2020.

District and Intergroup Meetings – Will continue to attend meetings as invited.

**Delegate’s Report:**  Cynthia T. provided her “Delegate Report” on news and events at the General Service Office and A.A. around our Area. A soft copy of her “Delegate Report” for September 2020 was emailed to the area and posted on the MGS website. She provided Random Musings of your Delegate; General Service Board and GSO Updates, Financial Updates; A.A Grapevine News, Northeast Region Updates & Nerd Happening; and Conference Agenda Review Committee (CARC) Updates. To review details on these topics and the Delegatespast and upcoming virtual travels, please refer to the “Delegate Report” attached to the minutes. Cynthia finished by taking questions from members on the Committee Meeting. Majority of question related to GSO finances and the quality service that they are providing.

**Break at 10:19 a.m. Meeting reconvened at 10:30 a.m. with 39 members attending the meeting.**

***SESSION TWO***

**Committee Reports:**

**Accessibilities**: Chair Jessica W. reported they are working with Senior Centers to meet their needs. Attending the bimonthly International Accessibilities meetings, the 2nd and 4th Monday virtually at 7:00 p.m. The online A.A. intergroup has created the meeting filter of “Seniors” by request and it is being used by multiple meetings. Continuing to look at interpretation/translation options for the MD State Convention. Next NERAC (North East Regional Accessibilities Committee) meeting is on September 28, 20200 at 7:00 p.m. Looking for anyone with technical assistance skills for multi-room virtual interpretation or who is bilingual and willing to participate with interpretation. Also, member interested in learning how to use the interpretation equipment when purchased. If interested, please contact Jessica W.

**Finance**: Chair Jim R. reported the Committee has been preparing the 2021 budget proposal which will be presented at the next Area Committee meeting in November. Still waiting on a few Committees to respond with their budget request. Have been working on our 2019 tax submissions and State non-profit filings. We have requested proposals from several firms for these services for tax year 2020 to avoid budget overruns which we experienced with our 2019 tax accountant.

**Grapevine:** Chair Meryl T**.** report the Committee is rolling out a program, "Extend Your Hand" by collecting old issues of Grapevine to serve members who are not able to attend virtual or conference call meetings. These may be members in Rehabs, Nursing Facilities, Hospitals, or any place they are isolated due to COVID-19. Sending an email out for ideas.

**Intergroup Liaison**: Chair Kathi K. reported that IGLC is looking for technical support behind the scenes on virtual meetings to keep the option of offering Hispanic translation to the Maryland Hispanic Intergroup. A request has been sent to the technology chair. It was realized at the first translated meeting that coordinating translation virtually requires more time, attention, and a specific skillset then one person can do while simultaneously hosting the meeting. Kathi K. attending multiple monthly intergroup meetings in Area 29.They created a picnic packet to hand out to groups who have in-person events during the COVID restriction to explain Maryland General Service which contains: An Explanation of the Service Structure; The Inverted Triangle; Why Do We Need a Conference (Service Manual); The Glossary of Acronyms and Definitions; The Role of the DCM; The Role of the GSR; Box 459 from 2006 regarding Dark Districts; Map of Maryland as Intergroups and CARCS are districted; A list of contacts for assistance or questions). Kathi K. and Jen G BAIG attended ICOAA (Intergroup & Central Offices of AA) It is a 4-day Seminar where Intergroups from across the nation come together to discuss issues specific to administrators and special workers at Intergroups. The next ICOAA will be in Rhode Island in 2021. The next IGLC meeting is October 5th at 6:30 p.m. Cynthia T will discuss the GSC Financial Reports.  Jen G. will be the guest speaker at the November IGLC meeting to discuss the ICOAA Seminar from her perspective.

**2020 MD State Convention**: Lori M. requested David R., Chair to wait till “New Business” to provide his report when we are discussing the 2021 Maryland State Convention. No objections.

**2020 Mini-Conference**: Kurt W. reported the initial 2021 Mini-Conference planning meeting was held on August 31st and the committee consisting of Kurt W., Frank M., Jessica W., Cynthia T., and Linda J.  Following the recommendations from GSO, the Mini-Conference will be held virtually on April 10, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 or 3:00 p.m. with a guest speaker. The committee discussed creating a fifth CARC, comprised of Area Service Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs. The use of online platforms removes geographic constraints. There are typically agenda items related to committee processes, workbook, and kit reviews, etc. that such a CARC would be valuable. Would appreciate feedback from Committee Chairs or Co-Chairs. Next committee meeting is scheduled virtually on September 28th. Anyone interested in helping please contact Kurt W.

**Policies & Procedures**: Linda J. reported the Policies & Procedures Committee received a request from Area Chair, Lori M. to review the following two items for possible updates in MGS current practice documents and Handbook: (1) financial controls and who would be responsible for monitoring contracts when potential changes need to be made; and (2) clarification of the language in MGS Bylaws Article Three, Section 3.03(c) regarding investments in excess of $1,500.00.

**Treatment**: Frank M. report the Committee continues to explore options to reach out to treatment centers during the Pandemic. Frank attended workshops in London and Area 13 on Bridging the Gap. The Committee will be using the data that was gathered from the sharing session and the workshops and will be looking at the future of Bridging the Gap.

**DCM Reports:**

**District 1:** DCM Craig R. reported District meetings are held virtually. Looking for proper place to hold meeting safely in-person. District just approved to get a virtual account. They started taking 3 meetings a week into Avenues Treatment Center. Working with jail to open a virtual meeting.  Started receiving a Grapevine subscription. Working on Anonymity Workshop. Some meetings still held outside so changes will be made shortly, either close for winter or virtual. We now have a Venmo account listed on our webpage for the 7th tradition.

**District 3 & 4**: No Reports.

**District 6:**  DCMNancy H. reported the District is still meeting virtually. 3 groups are temporary closed due to COVID-19, 3 groups meet virtually, and 12 are meeting in person. No events or issue.

**District 7:** DCM Mary M. reported District 7 Website had over 400 out of 800 plus hits that were from people new to the site. They are considering generating posters with QR Codes to help members find meetings.  This will be cutting back on the number of directories that need to be printed and reduce costs.  Working with the Accessibilities Committee on how to get meetings to those in Assisted Living.

**District 9**: DCM Mike H. reported their updated website currently list: 12 live meetings, 14 online meetings, 6 hybrid meetings, 53 suspended meetings and 15 meetings that have not reported their status to our web chair. Login information can also be found on the website. The last District 9 meeting was in person on September 15th. The October 20th District meeting should be a hybrid. They approve a motion to make a special contribution to A.A. World Services in August. Have resumed treatment facility weekly meetings at Shoemaker Center and MMRSS. Thier Bridging the Gap rep. has begun to coordinate efforts with the Baltimore Intergroup Institution Committee. Planning to hold our annual Alcothons at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s at the Crossroads Church in Westminster.

**District 10:** DCM Charles L. reported 1 new indoor meeting. Some meetings are changing formats. District 10 meets the 1st Saturday of every month. Contribution to GSO was $600.00.

**District 11, 14, 15 & 17:** No reports.

**District 18:** Alt**.** DCM Dave G. reported the last District meeting was in July. All activities have been cancelled. Halloween Party at The Church of the Holy Apostles & St Stephen in Arbutus, MD. Is on the calendar but may be cancelled.

**District 19:** DCMJenna F. reported that District 19 held its monthly virtual meeting earlier today.  On September 12th, the DCM attended the Area 29 DCM/Alt-DCM call which hosted a panel of guest, Nikki O., Area 28 Delegate in Maine. Discussion centered around the series of workshops being performed in Area 28 and how a similar series may serve Area 29. The DCMs collective decided to hold, discussion on each call, wherein the Service Manual is reviewed. All registered groups in District 19 are holding meetings in virtual format except for three meetings. One is a hybrid format virtual and in person, another is in person and with a telecom only based call-in option, and the third went from a virtual to a hybrid format, only to return to a virtual after unsuccessful attempts at meeting in person. A singular meeting has been formed, which meets in person, socially distanced, in a city park, however, is not registered with the District or the Area.

**District 20:** DCM Dave M reported 7 members meet in person on September 20th. They are planning a virtual Gratitude Speaker Meeting in November and possibly including the HAIG. Groups are starting to meet in person while others continue virtual meetings

**District 22, 23, 24, 25 & 27:** No reports.

**District 28:** DCM Jean B. reported the District meets virtually. A couple of groups are looking for new locations for their meetings. Meetings are being held virtual only, hybrids, and 2 separate meetings (virtual and live simultaneously). Smaller groups are not meeting. Reviewed financial status through August and discussed events that were budgeted to see if they would hold them. A draft of 2021 Budget will be discussed at our September meeting. Discussed devoting time during meetings to read Service Manual and A.A. pamphlets included in the GSR Kits to familiarize everyone with the materials.

**District 30, 31, & 32:** No report.

**District 33:** DCM Misty L. reported the District is planning a training and listening session for further 12 step work during COVID-19 on September 19, 2020. Four members of District 33 met virtually to discuss the implementation of “The Church Lot” sessions. These sessions provide the opportunity for talks that normally take place in a parking lot of a church or other meeting hall, to take place, free from the decorum and restraints of an A.A. meeting format. The next such gathering takes place on October 1, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. They added a reminder to not post any virtual addresses at any time on any social media. It is against the Traditions of anonymity and invites virtual bombing. The District meets virtually once a month on Saturday mornings 10:00 a.m. at the discretion, or request of District 33 members.

**District 34:**  No Report.

**District 35:** DCMJeanine W. reported Cynthia T., Area 29 Delegate, gave a presentation on GSO Finances titled “It’s Your Money, Where Is It?”  Discussed COVID-19 safety at meetings, following their hosting facilities requests and how our Traditions apply. 11 members attended.

**District 36:** DCM Brandi D. Reported they have a new Registered Group “Sisters in Recovery Big Book” - Women’s meeting on Friday Nights in Leonardtown MD. This is their first Hybrid meeting. The local rescue squad is the location of their District’s monthly meeting and a weekly A.A. meeting. The rescue squad is allowing groups to meet. Last meeting, they discussion whether the District would start meeting in person. After an inclusive discussion, they decided to not make a finite decision. Plan to vote on meeting in person at the next District meeting. Going to take it one month at a time due to some concerns. Discussing our Annual Alcothon, possible virtual.

**District 37, 38, & 39:** No reports

**District 40:** Alt. DCM Julie. K. reported the District met virtually. 12 members attended the last meeting and had a discussion on the importance of groups following the COVID guidelines. The district has in person, virtual, and hybrid meetings. Getting financial donation to the District. Bob C. was a guest speaker on Tradition 9 and Concept 9.

**District 41**: DCM Grace H. reported the District met on September 2nd, and the following items were discussed and/or actions taken: The 2021 Proposed Budget was presented for GSRs to discuss with their groups and vote on at the November Meeting. Special thank you to Area 29 Delegate Cynthia T. for sharing her experience strength and hope with at the District Picnic on September 19th. The event was recorded and will be emailed to GSRs and sent to Area Webmaster to be accessed possibly via a drop box platform. District Elections will be conducted on Wednesday, October 7th. Area 29, Panel; 68 Past Delegate, Don B., will be proctoring the elections by 3rd Legacy Procedure virtually.

**District 42**: DCM Diane F. reported the District meets virtually. The Workshop Committee is working on an upcoming workshop, “Living Sober No Matter What” on Saturday, November 7th. from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. District Treatment Committee attending some calls with Frank M. on BTG updates to Area 29 based on the Sharing Session from last Assembly in August.

**District 46:** No Report

***Break at 11:45 a.m. Meeting reconvened at 12:00 p.m. with 35 members attending the meeting.***

***SESSION THREE***

**Old Business:**  There was no Old Business

**New Business:**

**Maryland State Convention 2021:** Lori M. state that she would like to get a sense of the Area Committee as to where they are with moving forward with an in-person MD State Convention to have an informed group conscience. Looking for an open conversation on who would volunteer to help, who would or would not attend such an event and any concerns. Not looking for any motions since we have plenty of time and flexibility for discussion based on the current terms with the Clarion Hotel. Lori M. requested that David R., MD State Convention Chair provide his report. He stated the following details concerning the 2020 and 2021 MD State Convention.

The 2020 Convention Committee submitted its final Budget versus Actual report to the Area Finance Committee for review on September 12, 2020. They incurred unrecoverable costs that were specific to 2020 totaling $727.94 for line items such as flyer printing, PayPal fees, and P.O. Box rental.  There were also line items totaling $2092.80 paid out that will carry over to the 2021 State Convention which include prepaid Speaker travel, P.O. Box rental, and hotel deposit. 2020 Seed returned to the Area29 general account totaled $229.46.

The 2021 Convention Committee is planning to use the same theme of “50 Years, One Day at a Time” and the Speakers scheduled for 2020 have re-committed. Will be receiving a revised Contract from the Clarion Inn Event Center near the 1st of October which does not required a signature until after the next Area Assembly in November. Area Chair, Lori M. and State Convention Chair, David R. negotiated a revised cancellation date with the hotel that allows us to cancel without penalty any time before December 24, 2020. Likewise, the hotel’s COVID-19 clause allows us to cancel after that date if any governmental restrictions prevent us from using the facility at 100% capacity. The Maryland State Convention is currently planned to be held on June 25–27, 2021.

The 2021 MD State Convention budget is based on the previously conservative assumption that 600 people will register for the convention. That they will purchase 190 Saturday Banquet tickets and a total of 245 other meals on Friday and Saturday. The primary financial commitment to the Clarion is a Food and Beverage guarantee of $15,000. This includes coffee paid for by registration fees. Meeting room costs are $0 if all 210 hotel room nights in our block are booked. If 80%-99% are booked the meeting room costs will be $1,000. There is a sliding scale thereafter down to a point where if less than 40% of rooms are booked the fee for meeting rooms would be $7,500. Expected other expenses likely to be incurred prior to the actual date are items such as flyer printing, Speaker travel, banners, etcetera and will total about $7,000. The best estimate is that if only 50% of our budgeted registrations and meal purchases occur the incoming revenue will be $15,000. Total expenses will be about $30,000, a net loss of $15,000. If there is no revenue whatever the total cost, and loss, would be $30,000.

Lori M. opened the session for discussion based on the information that David R. provided, members past experiences with attending the MD State Convention, the GSO positions on not hosting large events prior to July 1, 2021 and our personal thoughts and willingness to commit to attending the MD State Convention. Following a lengthy and informative discussion, Lori M. ask the following electronic poll question to get a sense of the room; “If you had to decide right now, would you go to the MD State Convention?” Results: 5 (16.7%) would attend, 19 (66.3%) would not attend, and 6 (20%) not sure. This topic will be on the October Area Inventory Assembly’s Agenda. Please ask members in your District and Home Groups for feedback prior to this meeting. All are encouraged to attend.

**MARGENSER Discussion:** Lori M., Area Chair recommended addressing this item at the Area 29 Inventory Assembly. There were no objections.

**General Service Conference Potential Agenda Item:** Cynthia T., Area 29 Delegate inform the Area Committee that a group composed of members from each of the CARCs, past Delegates, current Alternate Delegate and current Delegate are working on a Proposed Agenda Item around a procedural action that was taken at the last General Service Conference, where the Board Chair and Conference Chair ruled a Conference Committee Report out of order. The Conference Committees are made up of Delegates and are the voice of the groups of Alcoholics Anonymous and the report was shut down 24 hours before the report was to be given and was not presented to the body. Afterwards, there was talk of having an unofficial, suspended business discussion on the items, which set a negative tone.

Currently, they have assigned members to various portions of the research into the background information on this process. This includes reviewing Roberts Rules of Order, General Service Board By-laws and Charter, Conference By-laws and Charter, The Service Manual, Concepts and Traditions to determine what happens, what can happen, and what is already authorized to happen around the Chair of Conference calling something out of order that comes from a Conference Committee. This will be coming to the Area Committee in November for consideration to move forward. This is an Area wide effort, not exclusive to a CARCs. Once finalized, other Area’s may consider co-sponsoring this Proposed Agenda Item if they can receive it in time to review.

Following discussion, it was explained that the goal is to have a set procedure on how to handle this situation in the future. Lori stated that no action was required by the Area Committee.

***A motion to adjourn was made by Morgan J and seconded by Bob C. The Motion to close carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.***

Respectfully submitted,

Craig T.

Area 29, Panel 70 Secretary