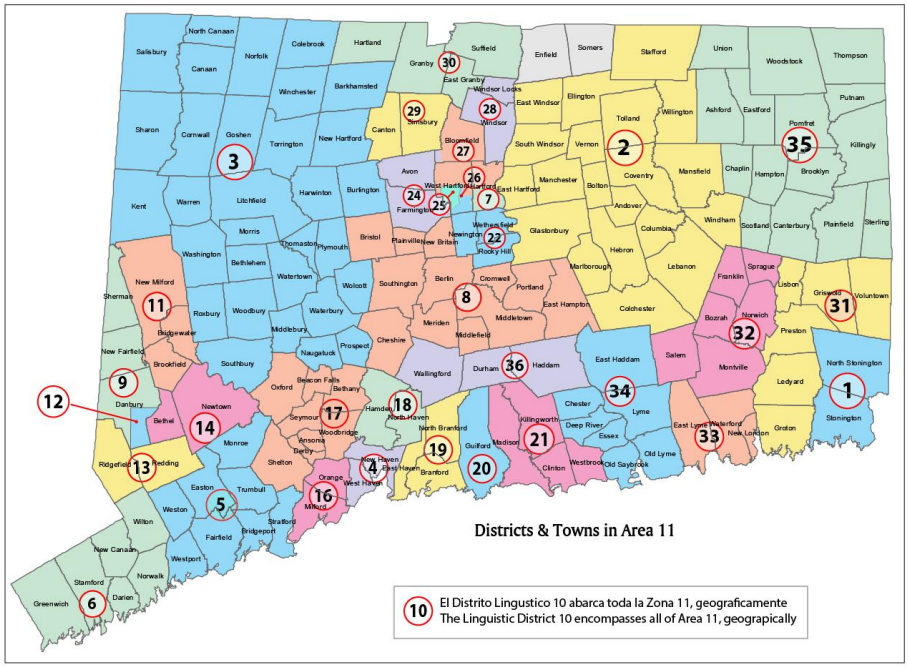
Area 11 State of Connecticut

GSR Handbook

AREA 11

Alcoholics Anonymous

Connecticut General Service Committee



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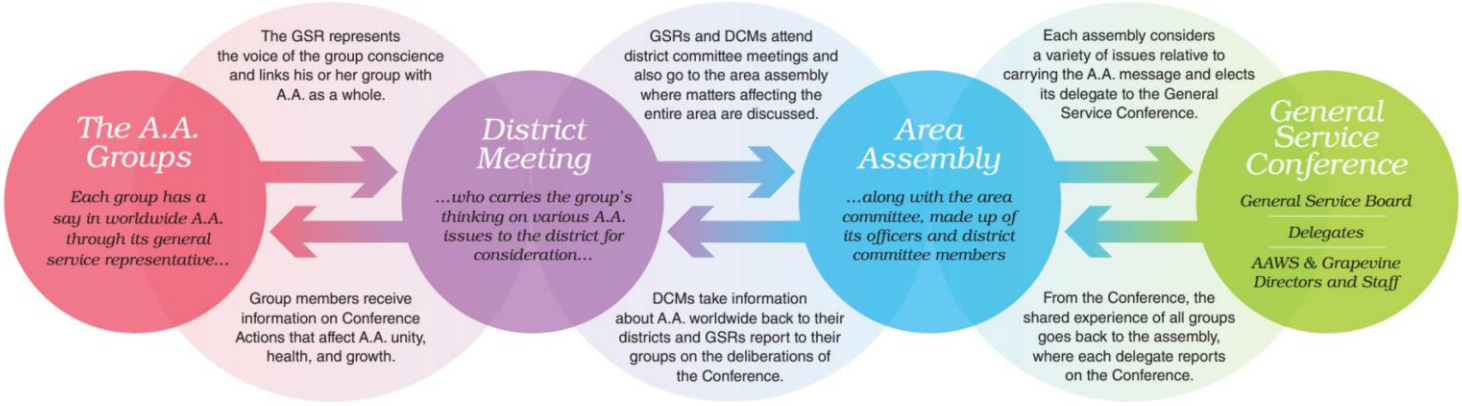
SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO GENERAL SERVICE



"Our Twelfth Step – carrying the message – is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an A.A. service is anything, whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.

Services include meeting places, hospital, cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

These services, whether performed by individuals, groups, areas or A.A. as a whole, are utterly vital to our existence and growth. Nor can we make A.A. more simple by abolishing such services. We would only be asking for complication and confusion.

Concerning any given service, we therefore pose but one question: "Is this service really needed?" If it is, then maintain it we must, or fail in our mission to those who need and seek A.A."

("A.A.'s Legacy of Service", *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services*, p. 1)

GSR Preamble

While A.A. does not have an official GSR preamble, the following, which was written around 1974-75, and was printed in the Aug-Sept 1989 issue of Box 4-5-9, is suggested in the request as the GSR preamble:

"We are the General Service Representatives. We are the link in the chain of communication for our groups with the General Service Conference and the world of A.A. We realize the ultimate authority in A.A. is a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. As trusted servants, our job is to bring information to our groups in order that they can reach an informed group conscience. In passing along this group conscience, we are helping to maintain the unity and strength so vital to our Fellowship. Let us, therefore, have the patience and tolerance to listen while others share, the courage to speak up when we have something to share, and the wisdom to do what is right for our groups as a whole."

General Service

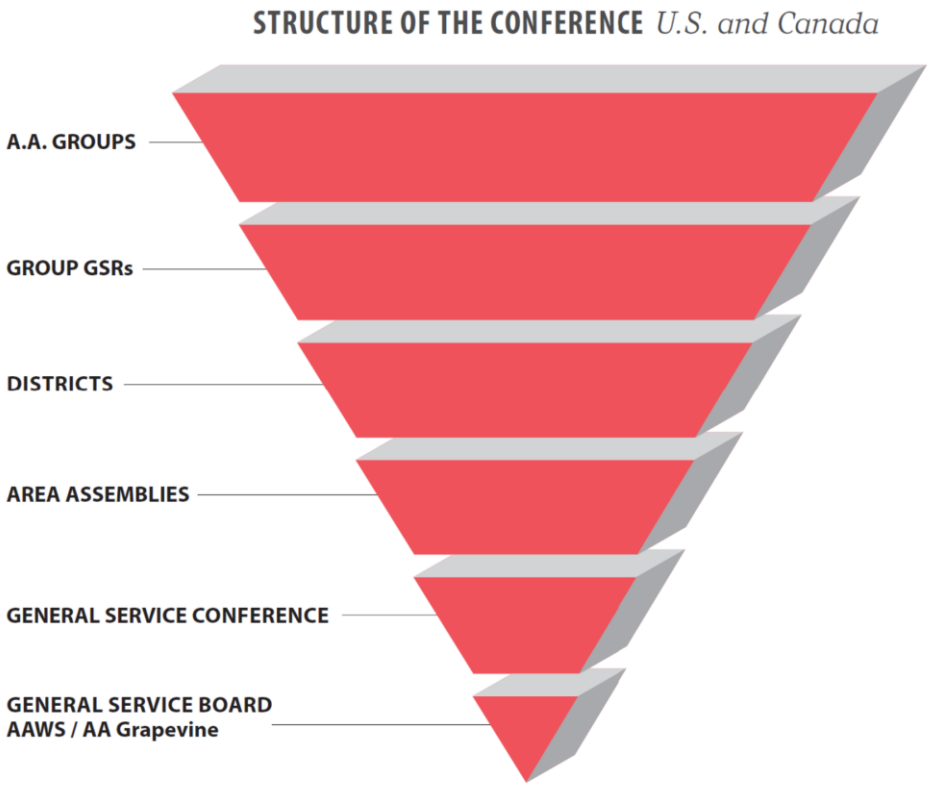
"In the General Service structure, the groups have final authority. But how do the groups make their thoughts and wishes — their group conscience — known to the rest of the triangle? General service is organized to do exactly this. Each section of the triangle has a role to play." (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services*, p. 3)

The Twelve Traditions suggest that A.A. should never be organized, that there are no bosses and no government in A.A. Yet, the Traditions recognize the need for some organization to carry the message in ways that are impossible for the local groups – such as publication of uniform literature, helping new groups get started, communicating with outside entities, professionals and organizations, and carrying the message in other languages and to other countries. The General Service Conference structure is the framework in which these 'general services' are carried out. It is the service structure that takes the place of government in A.A. and ensures that the full voice of A.A. will always be heard.

The General Service Representative's (GSR) job is to link their group with A.A. as a whole. The GSR represents their group conscience, reporting the group's thoughts to the District Committee Member (DCM) who works on such issues with the Area Committee and to the Area Delegate who carries them to the General Service Conference. This communication is a two-way street, making the GSR responsible for bringing Conference Actions that affect A.A. unity, health, and growth back to the group. Only when the GSR keeps the group informed, and communicates the group conscience, can the Conference truly act for A.A. as a whole.

As a GSR, you are your A.A. Group's link with the Connecticut Area general service, the General Service Office (GSO), and the General Service Conference.

The "Upside-Down Triangle"



- **Group**: The communication process focuses on the Group, which lets its Group Conscience be known to
- It's elected GSR.
- **Districts**: Groups are geographically organized into Districts. The GSRs of these Groups select District
- Committee Members (DCMs), who become part of the Area Committee.
- **Area**: Area 11 is comprised of 34 Districts (33 geographic districts and one linguistic (Spanish) district. and covers the state of Connecticut.
- **Conference**: The U.S./Canada Conference is divided into 93 Areas. Membership in the Conference
- consists of Area Delegates, Trustees, Directors of A.A. World Services and the Grapevine, and A.A. staff an d members of the General Service Office and the Grapevine.
- **The General Service Board** is made up of 21 Trustees. It reports to the Fellowship through quarterly
- reports and also in the Final Conference Report. The board's two operating corporations, A.A. World Servi ces, Inc. and A.A. Grapevine, Inc., report to the Fellowship in the same way.

SECTION II

THE GROUP AND THE GENERAL SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

The Group in Alcoholics Anonymous

The group is recognized as the fundamental unit in Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). The essence of an A.A. group is clearly outlined in the Long Form of Tradition Three and a portion of Concept Twelve, Warranty Six. According to these guiding principles, "Any group of alcoholics, gathered for sobriety, may call themselves an AA group provided that as a group, they have no other purpose or affiliation." This statement emphasizes the unity and primary purpose of A.A. groups: to support sobriety without external connections or objectives.

Membership within an A.A. group is inclusive. As long as individuals are alcoholics and they maintain an open-door policy for all alcoholics seeking assistance—regardless of profession, gender, or other distinctions—and adhere to all defining aspects of an A.A. group, they may identify as an A.A. group. This principle, found in "The A.A Group…Where It All Begins," underscores the welcoming nature and accessibility of A.A. groups for those in need.

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. There is no need for a formal application. Membership is determined by personal declaration: individuals become members of A.A. simply by stating their intent and continuing to participate. Likewise, group membership follows a similar approach—members are part of a group if they say they are and keep returning.

Participation in an A.A. group provides each individual with the opportunity to engage in the group conscience process. This allows members to consider and shape decisions on matters that impact the group, the District, the Area, and the Fellowship as a whole. For further detail on how groups are organized and the various opportunities for service, the pamphlet "The A.A. Group" offers comprehensive information.

The General Service Representative (GSR)

"For most A.A.s, membership in a home group is one of the keys to continuing sobriety. In a home group, they accept service responsibilities and learn to sustain connections with other recovering alcoholics. The home group affords individual A.A.s the privilege of voting on issues that affect the Fellowship as a whole; it is the very basis of the service structure. As with all group conscience matters, each member has one vote.

The role of the general service representative, or GSR, is essential to the purpose of general service. Bill W. wrote in Concept I of *The Twelve Concepts for World Service:* "The A.A. groups today hold ultimate responsibility and final authority for our world services." The role of the GSR is essential to ensuring that groups can fulfill that responsibility. Only when a GSR keeps the group informed and communicates the group conscience can the Conference truly act for A.A. as a whole. This communication is a two-way street, making the GSR responsible not only for bringing forward the group's voice, but for taking back to the group conference actions that affect the Fellowship's unity, health and growth.

So, what is the role of the GSR?

The GSR is the link between the group and "A.A. as a whole." This link becomes a channel through which news, information, opinions and ideas can flow back and forth. Importantly, this also gives the group a voice in the affairs of the Fellowship. The GSR is that voice.

There is more than one way for GSRs to express their group's thoughts and wishes — their conscience — in general service.

When the GSR is present at assemblies, the group's voice is heard. The presence of a GSR says their group cares about what's going on in the Fellowship and wants to learn and make its concerns and suggestions known.

When the GSR participates, the group's voice is heard. It can be through a GSR sharing the group's concerns across a conference table from other GSRs in a district meeting. It can be through questioning a budget item or proposing an idea important to the group at an area assembly. It can be through making an impassioned plea about an agenda item to the delegate on the eve of the annual General Service Conference meeting.

When the GSR votes, the group's voice is heard. The GSR votes with the trusted servants that lead the district and the area as well as the delegate that represents the area at the annual General Service Conference meeting. The group's voice is heard when the GSR votes on how best to use Seventh Tradition contributions to carry out Twelfth Step services.

Qualifications of the GSR

The experience within the Fellowship highlights several key qualifications that contribute to the effectiveness of a General Service Representative (GSR).

- Continuous Sobriety: An effective GSR typically has maintained at least two years of continuous sobriety. This period allows the individual to develop a stable foundation in recovery and a deeper understanding of the principles of A.A.
- Familiarity with the Group: The GSR should be well acquainted with their group's history, priorities, traditions, and procedures. This familiarity enables them to accurately represent the group's perspectives and concerns within the broader service structure.
- Listening Skills: The ability to listen respectfully to all points of view is essential. A GSR must be open-minded and considerate, ensuring that diverse opinions within the group are heard and valued.
- Availability: It is important that the GSR has the time to consistently attend district meetings, the Area Assembly, and the group's business meetings. Active participation in these gatherings is crucial for effective communication and representation.

- Knowledge of A.A. Traditions and Literature: A working familiarity with the Twelve Traditions as well as A.A. recovery and service literature is necessary. This knowledge supports informed decision-making and adherence to A.A. principles in service work.
- Communication Access: the GSR should have an email address or another reliable method for maintaining contact with group members. Consistent communication helps ensure that information and feedback flow smoothly between the group and the wider Fellowship.
- Familiarity with Service Resources: Understanding how to use the General Service Office (GSO) and area websites is important. These resources provide valuable information and support for carrying out GSR responsibilities.
- Group Confidence: Above all, the GSR must have the confidence of the group. This trust is fundamental to effective leadership and representation

GSR Duties & Responsibilities (From The A.A. Service Manual)

The General Service Representative (GSR) plays a vital role in connecting the group to the wider A.A. service structure. The responsibilities are outlined as follows:

1. Participation in the Area 11 Assembly

Each group is part of one of the 93 areas that comprise the U.S./Canada General Service Conference. Specifically, Area 11 holds three Assemblies annually. There is a Pre-Conference Assembly before the General Service Conference where the Delegate seeks information to take to the General Service Conference. Second, there is a Post-Conference Assembly, where the Delegate explains what happened at the General Service Conference. And third, there is a Fall Assembly. Every other year, the Fall Assembly is a voting assembly where GSRs vote for the Area Officers for the next panel. GSRs are responsible for attending and actively participating in these assemblies, where they have both a voice and a vote on matters affecting A.A. as a whole.

2. Attendance at District Meetings

Groups belong to districts, which in turn are part of the larger areas. Each district typically holds regular meetings, the frequency of which may vary. GSRs are expected to attend these district meetings, where their participation includes both discussion and voting rights.

3. Reporting to the Group

GSRs regularly prepare and deliver reports to their group. These reports facilitate communication between the group and A.A., as a whole, providing updates on developments in general service that may be of interest. Additionally, GSRs are responsible for relaying any feedback, concerns, or wishes from their group members back to the district. For more guidance, refer to the section “Making Reports” in Chapter 1 of The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services.

4. Participation in Service Meetings

By attending district and area service meetings, GSRs gain a deeper understanding of the full range of A.A. and general service activities. The knowledge acquired at these meetings can then be shared with the group through oral or written reports.

5. Supporting the Seventh Tradition

GSRs collaborate with the group treasurer to foster support for the General Service Board, as well as for the area and district. Guidance on group contributions can be found in the Conference-approved pamphlet “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” This includes information on supporting local intergroups or central offices. While

suggestions are provided, groups may choose to follow them, modify them, or not contribute at all. For more details, consult the pamphlet "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix" regarding the practical aspects of the Seventh Tradition.

6. Keeping the Group Informed on A.A. Literature and Service Material

GSRs help ensure their group stays up to date with the latest A.A. literature and service materials. The AAWS and Grapevine literature catalogs are valuable resources. GSRs should keep their groups aware of:

- New literature, including books, formats, or other products released by A.A. World Services and Grapevine.
- New uses of technology, as A.A. continues to adopt new ways to share information and carry the message to alcoholics.
- Literature and materials designed to increase accessibility within A.A., supporting efforts to remove barriers for members who may have difficulty accessing the message.

7. Maintaining Up-to-Date Group Information

It is the GSR's responsibility to provide the District Committee Member (DCM) or district registrar with current group information. This ensures that contact details remain accurate for mailings from the General Service Office (GSO), the Area 11 newsletter, and any potential Twelfth Step opportunities.

8. Serving as Email Contact for the General Service Office

GSRs act as the primary email contact with the General Service Office. They receive the GSO bulletin Box 4-5-9 and keep their groups informed of A.A. activities taking place around the world.

9. Keeping the Alternate GSR Informed

The GSR should ensure that the Alternate GSR is kept up to date and involved with all pertinent information for the group.

For further information regarding the GSR's role and responsibilities, consult The A.A. Service Manual and the pamphlet "GSR: Your group's link to A.A. as a whole."

Alternate GSR

The Alternate GSR is elected by a group to serve on those occasions when the GSR is not available and is usually elected to the same two-year term as the GSR. This is especially important should the GSR, who has a vote, be unable to attend a district meeting or area assembly. The Alternate might also be asked to step in to give reports to the group.

Some Alternate GSRs are interested in more opportunities to serve. They might attend district meetings and area assemblies along with GSRs (although an alternate may vote only when the GSR is not present). Alternate GSRs may also get more involved in general service by attending and volunteering at workshops and other service events in the district and area." (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services*, p. 11)

Service Sponsorship

Many new General Service Representatives (GSRs) may feel compelled to handle the responsibilities of general service on their own, just as some newcomers attempt to navigate A.A. independently. However, there are significant benefits to seeking guidance and support, and it is strongly recommended not to undertake service work alone.

While general service can be highly rewarding and enjoyable, it is natural to encounter moments of uncertainty or to feel overwhelmed. Having a service sponsor can be instrumental in transforming these challenges into opportunities for personal growth, accomplishment, and even enjoyment.

A service sponsor acts as a resource for questions related to service responsibilities, the structure of general service, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts. They provide practical advice on how to apply these principles and assist in preparing reports for your group. Additionally, service sponsors share their experiences in managing time and expectations, offering support and guidance throughout your service journey. Their primary role is to help, drawing from their personal experience.

A service sponsor is typically an alcoholic who has made progress in both recovery and service, and who is willing to share this experience with another alcoholic beginning their own service path. Service sponsors often introduce newer members to many aspects of service, such as setting up meetings, working on committees, and participating in conferences. Through this process, it is crucial for the sponsor to help their sponsee understand the difference between serving the Fellowship and addressing personal needs within a group.

The foundation of all sponsorship is leading by example. Service sponsors can demonstrate to their sponsees the fulfillment that comes from contributing to Alcoholics Anonymous. They emphasize the spiritual nature of service work and highlight the importance of consistent effort and faith.

Qualifications of Service Sponsors

When choosing a service sponsor, it is helpful to seek an A.A. member who possesses:

- Knowledge of A.A. history and the service structure
- Familiarity with various service positions, as well as the principles and concepts that guide general service
- Understanding of the Twelve Traditions
- Experience with The A.A. Service Manual and the Twelve Concepts

Such individuals can often be found at area assemblies or service workshops. Listening to and connecting with experienced members at these events may help you identify a suitable service sponsor.

For further details, refer to the section on service sponsorship in the A.A. pamphlet “Questions & Answers on Sponsorship.”

(The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, p. 9)

Responsibility Statement:

I am responsible when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help. I want the hand of AA always to be to be there, and for that I am

SECTION III
THE DISTRICT

District Structure and Function

Groups within Connecticut Area 11 are organized into districts, which are generally composed of groups located in close proximity to one another. Area 11 consists of thirty-four districts: thirty-three geographic districts and one linguistic district dedicated to serving the Spanish-speaking community.

Most districts hold meetings once each month. Information about the scheduling of these meetings, including days and times, can be found in the Area Directory as well as on the Area 11 website (ct-aaa.org). These district meetings are typically attended by the District Committee Member (DCM), Alternate DCM, General Service Representatives (GSRs) and their alternates, district standing committee chairpersons, and occasionally a representative from an Intergroup or Central Service Office.

The regularity and continuity provided by monthly district meetings are highly valuable, as there are few entirely new or unique challenges that arise within groups. During these gatherings, GSRs share their experiences with one another, discussing how they have addressed common issues and what outcomes they have achieved. These shared experiences can be beneficial to other groups facing similar situations.

District meetings also provide a forum for discussing agenda items that require action or consensus at the Area Service Meetings. This setting enables GSRs to become more informed and equipped to bring back to their groups any business that may require a group conscience. The GSR or DCM then carries the group conscience back to the Area Committee, ensuring that each group's voice is heard in decision-making processes.

The Role of the District Committee Member (DCM)

The District Committee Member serves as an essential link between the groups in their district, the Area, and the wider A.A. Fellowship. By maintaining active communication with the A.A. groups in the district, the DCM helps ensure that all groups understand the significance of their participation in services at the local, district, area, and world levels.

Each district elects a DCM, who is responsible for conducting district meetings and serving as a member of the Area Committee. The DCM's role includes facilitating district meetings and encouraging as many groups as possible to engage actively in A.A. through representation and participation. As the district's spokesperson, the DCM represents the collective conscience of the district as a voting member of the Area Committee during Area Committee meetings. Districts may also assign additional responsibilities to the DCM and the Alternate DCM as needed.

For a comprehensive description of the responsibilities and duties of DCMs, please refer to The A.A. Service Manual.

SECTION IV

Connecticut AREA 11

The Role and Structure of the Area in the U.S./Canada General Service Conference

The Areas play a vital role within the General Service Conference structure of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) in the United States and Canada. Each Area serves as a direct link between A.A. groups, their members, and the wider service structure through the efforts of District Committee Members (DCMs) and General Service Representatives (GSRs). Alongside this connection, Areas also participate in the broader decision-making processes of A.A. by sending elected Delegates to the General Service Conference.

Primary Purposes of Connecticut Area 11

1. Election of a Delegate: Connecticut Area 11 elects a Delegate who carries the Area's collective conscience to the annual General Service Conference. At this Conference, decisions are made that impact A.A. throughout the U.S. and Canada.
2. Local Decision-Making Structure: Area 11 establishes a structure that enables groups within the Area to collectively discuss and decide on matters that affect their local community.
3. Carrying Out Twelfth Step Work: The Area undertakes Twelfth Step activities and initiatives that may not be practical or feasible for individual groups, districts, or intergroups to accomplish alone.

Area Composition and Representation

The United States and Canada are divided into 93 Areas, with each sending a Conference Delegate. Typically, one Area covers a single state or province, though in regions with a large A.A. population, there may be multiple Areas within a state or province. In some cases, an Area may span portions of more than one state or province. Connecticut Area 11 encompasses the entire state of Connecticut.

Area Committee Business Meetings and Assemblies

Area Committee business meetings are conducted online on the second Wednesday of January, March, May, June, July, September, and December, from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. These meetings provide a forum for Area 11 members to review and discuss important matters affecting the area. The meeting agenda typically includes reports from officers, updates from Service Committees, and the discussion of both new and ongoing business items.

In addition to regular business meetings, Area 11 hosts two key assemblies each year. The Spring Assembly is held in June and features a comprehensive report from the Area 11 delegate on the proceedings of the General Service Conference, which occurs in April. The delegate's report, along with other agenda items determined by the officers, ensures that members are informed about decisions impacting A.A. at the broader level. The Fall Assembly takes place in November and follows an agenda set by the Area 11 Officers, focusing on issues relevant to that time of year.

Area Committee Sharing Sessions

The Area 11 Committee holds sharing sessions in February, April, August, and September. These sessions provide area members with a dedicated opportunity to discuss and share their perspectives on a range of specific topics. The agenda for each session is determined by the Area officers, ensuring that the discussions remain relevant and focused.

Unlike other meetings, sharing sessions generally do not include Special Service Committee Reports unless there is an absolute necessity. This approach allows for more time to explore the selected discussion topics in depth, fostering open communication and collective understanding among Area 11 members.

Area Trusted Servants and Their Roles

Area Delegate (delegate@ct-aa.org)

The Area Delegate plays a pivotal leadership role within Area 11, engaging fully in Area functions and maintaining open communication among the General Service Office (GSO), the General Service Conference, and local groups. The Delegate is responsible for distributing General Service Conference agenda items to the groups, facilitating discussion and gathering group input. Regional Pre-Conferences are organized to further collect feedback from members. Each April, the Delegate carries the Area's collective conscience to the General Service Conference. Upon returning, the Delegate provides a comprehensive report to the groups, ensuring members are informed of the Conference's proceedings and decisions. For a complete list of duties, members are referred to The A.A. Service Manual, Chapter Five.

Alternate Area Delegate (altdelegate@ct-aa.org)

The Alternate Area Delegate receives all correspondence from the General Service Office related to the Conference that is sent to the Delegate, ensuring that they are fully informed and prepared to assume the Delegate's duties if necessary. The Alternate collaborates closely with the Delegate on issues impacting the Area and is available to chair or participate in special projects as needed or requested by the Area.

Area Chairperson (chair@ct-aa.org)

The Area Chairperson provides leadership by organizing, setting the agenda, and presiding over Area 11 service meetings. The Chairperson also communicates with Districts to address their concerns and issues. Additional responsibilities and a more detailed description of duties can be found in The A.A. Service Manual, Chapter Four.

Area Treasurer (treasurer@ct-aa.org)

The Area Treasurer is the guardian of Area 11's Seventh Tradition, ensuring financial transparency by providing regular reports to the Committee. The Treasurer monitors the Area's financial needs, including the annual budget and the income required for service work. They identify and address financial issues as they arise, receive and record contributions from groups by district, and are available to participate in service functions to discuss the Seventh Tradition, explain the regular contribution plan, and provide information on Area finances. The Treasurer also serves on the Finance Committee. The Area Treasurer also handles the writing of all checks approved by the Area 11

Assembly and is responsible for balancing the Area checkbook and reconciling the bank balance. The Treasurer also provides a quarterly listing of the check register, expenses, and credit lines.

Alternate Area Treasurer (alttreasurer@ct-aa.org)

The Alternate Treasurer coordinates with the Treasurer all Area 11 Finances, and can fill in for the Treasurer if there ever is a need.

Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary plays a vital administrative role in Area 11 by managing the documentation and distribution of official records for all meetings and assemblies. This includes taking roll call at each gathering and preparing attendance reports, which are then provided to the Chairperson, Delegate, and Alternate Delegate as required. During meetings and assemblies, the Recording Secretary records and transcribes the minutes, ensuring the wording of all motions and the outcomes of votes are captured accurately and without omission. Once completed, the minutes are distributed to all Area Committee Members, the General Service Office, Archives, and translators as designated by the Special Needs/Languages/Remote Communities Committee, utilizing electronic or physical mail as appropriate. Additionally, the Recording Secretary is responsible for sending notifications about upcoming District Committee Members and District Officers Meetings, ensuring effective communication within the Area.

Area Registrar

The Area Registrar is responsible for maintaining and disseminating up-to-date information about Area 11's meetings and trusted servants. Each month, the Registrar prepares and circulates a detailed calendar that includes Area Committee meetings, Special Service Committee meetings, District Meetings, Area events, and District Service Events, drawing on information provided by District Officers. This role also involves keeping an updated list of all Area Committee Members and Alternates, with changes promptly communicated to Area Officers. When new District Committee Members are appointed, the Registrar submits their information to the General Service Office and keeps an updated roster of District Officers.

Collaboration is a key aspect of the Registrar's duties. The Registrar works with the Area Delegate, District Committee Members (DCMs), the Schedules Committee, and other trusted servants to address concerns regarding group names, always upholding A.A.'s Twelve Traditions.

Other Trusted Servants and Their Roles

Accessibilities Chairperson

The Accessibilities Chairperson leads the Accessibilities Committee, which is dedicated to exploring, developing, and offering resources for alcoholics who face significant barriers in receiving the message of Alcoholics Anonymous and participating in its program of recovery. The committee focuses on supporting members with a range of accessibility challenges, maintaining communications to keep the public and relevant agencies informed about A.A. accessibility, and providing resources and guidance to groups so they can accommodate all A.A. members.

Answering Service Chairperson

The Answering Service Chairperson oversees the Answering Service Committee, responsible for providing a local and/or toll-free phone number throughout the state to help individuals seeking A.A. Each District maintains a list of A.A. volunteers who are available for 12-step calls. Districts use either A.A. volunteers or a professional answering service to handle incoming calls, provide meeting information, refer requests to Public Information (PI) or Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), and connect those seeking assistance with 12-step volunteers. The committee meets monthly to report on progress and share information between Districts.

Archives Committee Chairperson

The Archives Committee Chairperson leads efforts to preserve the experience, history, and memorabilia of the Fellowship throughout Area 11. The committee's main activities include collecting and safeguarding notes, records, and taped stories from early members while upholding the responsibility to protect the anonymity of all A.A. members. The Archives Committee is guided by the primary purpose of helping alcoholics achieve sobriety.

Cooperation with the Professional Community Chairperson

The Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) Chairperson heads the committee that provides information about A.A. to professionals and future professionals who encounter problem drinkers in their work. This includes health care professionals, educators, clergy, lawyers, law enforcement, judges, social workers, counselors, business managers, and those in the field of alcoholism. The committee works to establish communication channels between A.A. and these professionals, offering literature, presentations, and participation in conventions and conferences. Monthly meetings at the Area level ensure information is shared and that efforts remain focused on carrying the message to those still suffering.

Corrections Chairperson

The Corrections Chairperson leads the committee in carrying the A.A. message of recovery to individuals in prison and transitional facilities. The committee meets monthly to share information, solve issues, conduct business, and coordinate meeting lists. It arranges for volunteers to conduct meetings, distributes literature through the Bridging the Gap program, and facilitates initial contact with the local A.A. community. The committee includes representatives from all Districts in Area 11.

Grapevine Chairperson

The Grapevine Chairperson manages outreach to the Area 11 community for Grapevine and La Vina publications. The chairperson holds monthly meetings with District Representatives to foster excitement and interest in these magazines and their literature. Representatives receive the necessary literature for District work, and the committee organizes at least one event each year to involve the Area 11 community. Initiatives may include “Adopt a Sober House,” Grapevine/La Vina meetings, dances, and days of sharing to generate interest and engagement.

Public Information Chairperson

The Public Information (PI) Chairperson leads the committee in carrying the A.A. message to the general public, including the media. The Area 11 PI Committee facilitates the work of District PI committees and serves as a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences among members. The committee may also participate in Area-wide activities such as service round-ups and workshops. Each District PI committee operates autonomously, except in matters that affect A.A. as a whole.

Schedules Chairperson

The Schedules Chairperson is responsible for maintaining an accurate and up-to-date database of all A.A. meetings in Area 11, including meeting times, locations, and meeting types. This ensures that anyone seeking to attend an A.A. meeting can easily find the necessary information for meetings in Area 11.

Technology Chairperson

The Technology Chairperson provides the technology needs and all message-carrying functions of the Area 11 Committee, its service committees, event committees, Area officers,. The Technology Committee also manages equipment and computer-based software, and provides consultation, suggestions, and best practices for the use of that equipment and software.

Treatment Chairperson

The Treatment Chairperson oversees the committee's efforts to carry the message of recovery to individuals in treatment and transitional facilities. The committee meets monthly to share information, address challenges, conduct business, maintain meeting lists, and coordinate volunteers. It also distributes literature through the Bridging the Gap program and facilitates initial contact with the local A.A. community. The committee is composed of representatives from all Districts in Area 11.

Website Chairperson

The Website Chairperson is tasked with maintaining the Area 11 Connecticut General Service Committee, Inc. website. The website serves as a resource for information about Alcoholics Anonymous and Area 11 events and activities. All website content is pre-approved by the Website Committee group conscience, in accordance with A.A.'s second tradition.

Area 11 Convention Chairperson

The Convention Chairperson leads the meetings of the Convention Committee, arranges details of the convention venue and communicates information about the convention to the Area Service Committee.

Round-Up Chairperson

The Round-Up Chairperson organizes the annual Roundup event, which aims to encourage and educate Area 11 A.A. members about the General Service Structure while promoting the joy of practicing the Third Legacy of Service. The event includes presentations and workshops designed to support members in carrying the message of recovery and hope, and to inspire involvement in service through attraction.

Soberfest Chairperson

The Soberfest Chairperson leads the organization of Soberfest, an annual family fun event. Planning meetings are held the first Sunday of each month at 12 noon, beginning in November (weather permitting) and concluding in June. Soberfest offers camping, lodging, swimming, and fellowship, with participation from Al-Anon and Alateen.

Rompiendo Fronteras/Breaking Frontiers Chairperson

The Rompiendo Fronteras/Breaking Frontiers Chairperson organizes a one-day, fully bilingual sharing event with Al-Anon participation. The event's goal is to unite the Area 11 Spanish and English-speaking A.A. communities in the spirit of A.A.'s three legacies.

CSCYPAA Chairperson

The CSCYPAA Chairperson is responsible for carrying the A.A. message of recovery, unity, and service to a wide audience, particularly encouraging young people in A.A. to become actively involved in service. The Committee plans and conducts an annual convention for young people in A.A., fostering opportunities for growth and the satisfaction of seeing commitments through. The process includes active participation in coordination and cooperation, learning about the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, and applying these principles. The committee aims to build unity, teach patience, and provide opportunities to make new friends and work as a team.

Al-Anon Workshop Representative

The Al-Anon Workshop Representative serves as the liaison for Al-Anon workshops, facilitating communication and cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A. members at these events.

Al-Anon Convention Representative

The Al-Anon Convention Representative acts as the point of contact for Al-Anon participation in conventions, ensuring collaboration and shared purpose between Al-Anon and A.A. during these gatherings.

SECTION V

BEYOND THE AREA

The General Service Conference

Why Do We Need a Conference?

The late Bernard B. Smith, nonalcoholic, then chairperson of the board of trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered that question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting: "We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from this room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined for alcoholism. We need it to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in A.A. that rebirth that brought us back to life.

"We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must ensure can never invade A.A. We need it to ensure A.A. against government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect A.A. against disintegration while preventing overintegration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, its Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

"We need it to ensure that changes within A.A. come only as a response to the needs and the wants of all A.A., and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of A.A. never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is."

General Service Board Trustee

Reason for General Service Trustees: The general service trustees are A.A. members who serve on the respective boards of AAWS and Grapevine. They are available at any time for the solution of problems on which GSO or Grapevine staff members need help. Traditionally, they have been selected for their business or professional backgrounds in order to provide the boards with particular expertise that may be needed or requested by each of the corporate boards.

At-Large Trustee

Reason for Trustees-at-Large: These trustees are selected for their service experience and familiarity with A.A. principles. They bring to the board's discussions a broad perspective informed by their ongoing contact with the international A.A. community.

Northeast Region and Area 11

In the organizational structure of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) within the United States and Canada, Areas are grouped into eight distinct Regions. Area 11 is included in the Northeast Region, which encompasses a wide geographic range. The Northeast Region consists of the following states and districts: Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly (NERAASA)

The Northeast Regional AA Service Assembly, commonly referred to as NERAASA, serves as a significant forum for the Alcoholics Anonymous community within the Northeast Region. Its primary purpose is to bring together General Service Representatives (GSRs), District Committee Members (DCMs), Area Officers, Area Committee Members, Intergroup and Central Office Representatives, as well as other trusted servants from the Northeast Region. This assembly provides an opportunity to discuss issues and concerns related to the General Service Conference that impact Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, in addition to addressing important topics concerning recovery, unity, and service that are common to the areas in the Northeast Region.

NERAASA is organized as a weekend event, featuring a series of panel presentations and open floor discussions that focus on current issues affecting Alcoholics Anonymous. The assembly also includes the Northeast Regional Trustee's report, offering valuable insights and updates, followed by a Saturday night dinner and an A.A. speaker meeting, fostering fellowship and shared experience among attendees.

Throughout the weekend, NERAASA holds multiple round table sharing sessions designed specifically for various trusted servants. These sessions cover key service roles and functions, including District Committee Members, General Service Representatives, A.A. Literature, Archives, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Public Information, Treatment Facilities, Correctional Facilities, Grapevine, Area and District Chairpersons, Central Office and Intergroup representatives, Area Delegates and Alternate Delegates, as well as Area and District Registrars. These sharing sessions enable participants to exchange ideas, best practices, and solutions to common challenges encountered in their service work.

SECTION VI

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Principle of Rotation in General Service

The principle of rotation is rooted in Tradition Two, which states: "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." This foundation emphasizes that leadership within Alcoholics Anonymous is about service, not authority.

In addition to Tradition Two, Concepts IX and XI also address the importance of rotation within General Service, as referenced in The AA Service Manual / Twelve Concepts for World Service (p. 11). The practice of rotation ensures that members regularly step into and out of service positions, promoting shared responsibility and preventing any one individual from holding a role for an extended period.

Typically, in most groups, the General Service Representative (GSR) is elected for a two-year term. Ideally, this term aligns with the Area rotation cycle. Similarly, District Committee Members (DCMs) and Area officers also serve two-year terms, maintaining consistency and continuity within the service structure.

Each year, about half of the A.A. groups are involved in electing new GSRs, while half of all area assemblies elect qualified delegates to participate in the annual Conference meeting. The timing of these elections depends on whether the area serves as an "odd" or "even" panel. A panel refers to a group of delegates who begin their service at the General Service Conference in a specific year, and each panel is assigned a number corresponding to the Conference at which the delegate first serves. For example, delegates whose first Conference is the 75th General Service Conference are known as Panel 75 delegates.

Commitment and Principles

As members of the general service structure, principles that we must now demonstrate as a trusted servant include willingness, self-sacrifice, honesty, consideration of others, thoughtfulness, love, tolerance and, most of all, basic etiquette.

- Do we mark our A.A. commitments on the calendar and work around them, or do we attend only if it doesn't interfere with our own pleasure?
- Do we attend service activities in order to become better informed, or do we do the least possible required?
- When we are unable to make an event that the GSR should attend, do we arrange for our alternate to be there?
- Do we keep our alternates well informed and involved?
- Are we able to offer criticism lovingly and based on the application of our three legacies, or do we let personalities get in the way?

The Informed Group Conscience

Concept XII, Warranty Four:
"That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity."

"Here on the one hand we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision that we are called upon to make…" (*The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*, p. C-53)

The Group Conscience strives for unanimity through enlightenment, spirituality, and the practice of our principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions through full discussion. On sensitive issues, the group works slowly, discouraging formal motions until the group has a clear sense of its views. Placing principles before personalities, the group is wary of dominant opinions. The group conscience is the aggregate of experience a group develops after applying the Traditions and Concepts to a question. The difference between a group conscience and a majority vote or group opinion is that one or more of the elements described above are missing.

Local Intergroups and Central Offices

A central or intergroup office is an A.A. service entity that involves partnership among groups in a community — just as A.A. groups themselves are partnerships of individuals. An intergroup/central office is established to carry out certain functions common to all the groups — functions which are best handled by a centralized office — and it is usually maintained, supervised, and supported by these groups in their general interest. It exists to aid the groups in their common purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

A.A. experience has demonstrated that intergroup/central offices are helpful, particularly in populous areas. The following suggestions outline the basic services an intergroup/central office might offer:

- Receiving, arranging, and following up Twelfth Step calls.
- Answering inquiries about A.A.
- Establishing local Public Information committees.
- Maintaining information about local hospitals and recovery facilities for alcoholics.
- Publishing local A.A. meeting lists.
- Providing a newsletter.
- Ordering, selling and distributing AA Conference-approved literature.

For further information reference Appendix S of The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World

SECTION VII

TIPS AND TOOLS

Reference Tools For The GSR

The GSR Kit List is available on AA.org here.

- *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service* (BM-31)
- The A.A. Group…Where it all Begins (P-16)
- GSR: Your group's link to A.A. as a whole (P-19)
- Circles of Love and Service (P-45)
- A.A. Tradition - How it Developed (P-17)
- Inside A.A. (P-18)
- The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated (P-8)
- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-2)
- *A.A. Comes of Age* (B-3)

Useful Links

- **Click this link** to see information for new trusted servants. Although it is possible to update contact information directly with GSO, to ensure you receive Area communications and Area 11 records are updated timely, please complete the New Position Holder Form from the Area 11 website.

- The A.A. Service Committees page enables interested members to obtain specific, additional, resources for various kinds of AA service work. Use the links below to get digital versions of available committee workbooks from GSO:
  - Accessibilities Workbook
  - Archives Workbook
  - Cooperation with the Professional Community Workbook
  - Correctionss Workbook
  - Literature Committee Guidelines Literature Workbook
  - Public Information Workbook
  - Treatment Workbook

  Note: Printing/saving a single copy of these items is permitted in accordance with the AA World Services, Inc Content Use Policy.

- Click the following link to get a digital copy of the current literature catalog.

Tips/Suggestions For A GSR
At The Home Group Meeting

- Attend your home group regularly
- Give regular reports to your group regarding the district, Area (Area newsletter) and GSO (Box 4-5-9)
- Explain issues to be voted upon and through discussion, develop group conscience (on matters at the District, Area and General Service Conference levels).
- Write down questions and comments from group members and bring to district meetings and Area Assembly meetings.
- Ensure your group is informed of updates at the General Service Office, A.A. World Services and the Grapevine, including updates/new editions of pamphlets and books

What to Expect At The District Meeting

GSR Responsibilities Before, During, and After the District Meeting

Before the Meeting

Prior to attending the District meeting, ensure that you have received all flyers for upcoming events within your District or Area. Distribute these flyers as appropriate to your group members. Additionally, review the meeting agenda and any preparatory materials that have been provided. This preparation helps you participate effectively in the meeting discussions.

During the District Meeting

At the District meeting, have all relevant reports available for reference, including the meeting agenda, Treasurer's report, and DCM report. These documents may be in electronic or hard copy format. Most of the meeting will consist of both verbal and written reports from various trusted servants.

Present your GSR report using either the provided example or district prompts. As you listen to reports, take notes on the information you believe your group will find important, including updates on open positions that should be added to your group announcements, points discussed during the open forum, and details on old business, new business, and motions.

Pay close attention to any topics that are sent back to the group for feedback. At the next District meeting, you will be responsible for sharing your group's conscience on these issues. If possible, try to sit with someone new or reach out to another GSR in attendance, whether in-person or at a virtual meeting.

After the Meeting

Once the District meeting has concluded, follow up and ask questions if further clarification is needed. Update your group with any new flyers or event information received at the meeting. Distribute these materials to your group either electronically or in hard copy to ensure everyone is informed.

Reporting Back to Your Home Group

Regularly sharing a General Service Representative (GSR) report with your group is essential. Start by asking your group how they would like to receive the information. Some groups may prefer a concise overview, while others appreciate a detailed account of the District meeting.

Consider using the District meeting agenda as a framework for your report, updating it as needed to suit your group's preferences.

Best Practices for Presenting Your Report

- Preparation: Always come prepared; avoid improvising your report.
- Positivity: Present the information in a positive manner to encourage engagement.
- Feedback: Invite group members to provide feedback on the topics presented.
- Announcements: Share District and group event announcements during meetings when there is an opportunity for A.A.-related announcements.

Delivering Your Report During Business Meetings

- Break down information into brief bullet points for clarity and ease of understanding.
- Include highlights from District meeting reports, such as:
- Financial reports (presented simply)
- Motions that were voted on at the District meeting
- New topics for group discussion
- Recap or discussions from Quarterly meetings
- District activities, including committee quarterlies, service opportunities, and Fellowship activities
- Any other noteworthy items from the meeting

If the group needs to develop an informed group conscience for voting purposes, provide more detailed information on the relevant topics.

Have the detailed reports collected at the District meeting available at the business meeting for members who wish to review them. If your group prefers, email a more comprehensive report for their reference.

Sample GSR Report

Report to Home Group

My name is _____ and I'm an alcoholic. I am honored to serve as your General Service Representative. A GSR is the link between an A.A. group and A.A. as a whole. It is my responsibility to bring you news and issues that concern A.A., and to bring this group's vote and opinions on issues being decided by the whole of A.A.

The District meeting occurred on _____ at _____ (location).

Items of interest discussed: _____

Items needing group conscience: _____

Upcoming events: _____

Other information: _____

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Report to the District

My name is _____ and I'm an alcoholic. I serve as the GSR for _____.

Service positions filled within the group: (Report openings or if they are all filled)

_____+_____

Concerns, challenges or things that are going well: _____

_____

_____

Upcoming group events:

_____

_____

Other Information:

_____

_____

Thank you for letting me be of service.

Group Conscience Process

(Written from the perspective of the person chairing the meeting)

Before you start:
Thoroughly explain the voting process: who may vote, how the vote will be cast, how many votes to pass, etc.

Then: Present the issue

When presenting an issue or topic it's recommended to remain neutral.
Sometimes the issue will be presented by the maker of the topic or by the DCM; there is no rule.

Then:

Allow time for discussion (Listen: is there a balance of viewpoints?)
When you start hearing people repeating the same information ask the following question, "Does anyone have any new information?"

Next:

Call for a vote.
Substantial unanimity (two-thirds) is the standard employed for most votes.
If your group conscience calls for something other than substantial unanimity, then go with the group conscience.

After the Vote:

Ask for the minority opinion and if they would like to speak
If no one from the minority wants to speak then the vote is over.

or

If someone or multiple people speak from the minority opinion. Someone who voted in the majority can call for a reconsideration of the vote if they have been swayed by the minority position.

If a reconsideration is requested, then facilitate a vote on whether to reconsider (and therefore reopen the discussion of) the original motion. This vote is passed with a simple majority.

If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate is resumed.

Brief Overview of Robert's Rules of Order

In general, our group chooses to follow Robert's Rules of Order in a flexible manner. The intent is not to apply these rules so strictly that genuine, heartfelt communication is hindered. Instead, we value open and sincere dialogue among all members.

It is crucial to recognize that the primary aim of rules of order is to facilitate the Conference in conducting its business efficiently and effectively. These rules are tools designed to help the Conference fulfill its responsibilities, enabling it to carry out the collective will of the Fellowship by achieving an informed group conscience.

Reference: The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World, page 173.

MOTION		REQUIRES A "SECOND"?	IS DEBATABLE?	VOTE REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL	MINORITY VOICE HEARD?
Committee Recommendation	Presented in the committee report.	Automatically seconded	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Amending a Motion	A motion on the floor is owned by the entire Conference body, no longer by the Committee that recommended it. The committee is not asked to vote on the motion to amend; any motion to amend a main motion depends on the approval of the Conference.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Tabling a Motion	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Moving to Recommit	Made without comment.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	NO
Calling the Question	Made without comment.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO
Reconsidering a Vote	May only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side. No action may be reconsidered twice.	YES May be seconded by either side.	NO	Simple Majority	NO
Making a Floor Action	Made without comment. Introduced any time during the Conference except at the Sharing Sessions. Is submitted in writing by the maker to the Conference secretary.	YES	YES	Two-thirds	YES
Declining to Consider a Floor Action	Made without comment. May be made after the maker of a floor action is provided time to state the rationale for it.	YES	NO	Two-thirds	NO

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Glossary Of Common A.A. Terms

- **Alternate**: A service worker who, at group, district, or area level, assists, supports and participates in service responsibilities, and stands ready to step into the service position if the person occupying it is no longer able to serve.
- **Archives**: A collection of A.A. memorabilia. The Archivist's functions might include collection, indexing, storing and exhibiting original and reproduced local, national and international A.A. material.
- **Area**: A geographical division within a state or Province. Normally there is one Area for each state or Province. Where there is high population, a state or Province may divide into two or more Areas.
- **Area Assembly**: A meeting of GSRs and committee members to discuss area affairs and, every other year, to elect a delegate and committee officers. The Assembly is a basic unit of the general service structure and conducts or helps coordinate most of the business for the Area.
- **Box 4-5-9**: The quarterly newsletter from the U.S./Canada General Service Office. This newsletter includes information about A.A. service, literature, events, sharing from groups, service committees and individual members.
- **Conference**: The General Service Conference; this can mean either the structure involving committee members, GSRs and delegates in an area, or the annual meeting of Conference delegates each spring in New York.
- **Concepts**: The twelve principles of service that have emerged from A.A.'s service accomplishments and mistakes since its beginning, as set forth by Bill W. in *The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service*.
- **Delegate**: The A.A. member elected every other year to represent the area at the annual Conference meeting in New York and to bring back to the area the results of that meeting.
- **District Committee Member (D.C.M.):** District committee member. An experienced GSR elected by other GSRs to represent the groups of their district in area committee meetings and to coordinate service activities in the district.
- **General Service Representative (G.S.R.):** An A.A. member who is elected by a Group to represent that Group's conscience in discussions at the District and Area levels. The GSR also keeps the group as informed as possible of important decisions, discussions and events occurring within A.A. at the district, Area, Regional, national and international levels.
- **Region**: A grouping of several areas from which a regional trustee comes to the board of trustees. There are six regions in the U.S., two in Canada.
- **Third Legacy**: Recovery and unity are our first two legacies. Our Third Legacy is Service: the sum total of all A.A. services, from the twelfth step call to A.A.'s coast-to-coast and worldwide activities.
- **Third Legacy Procedure**: Method by which delegates to the General Service Conference as well as area officers are typically elected by their area's assemblies.
- **Trustee**: A member of A.A.'s General Service Board. Fourteen trustees are A.A. members (Class B); seven are nonalcoholic (Class A).
- **Warranties**: The Twelfth Concept of World Service consists of The Six Warranties that are also Article 12 of the Conference Charter. Some consider these Warranties to be the A.A. Bill of Rights39