

MINUTES SMR Business Meeting Study

Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023

Attendees: [21] - Jim R, LisaG, Brigit, Carol, Charlotte R, Karen C, Karen W, Kelly F, Macy M, Maria, Nancy B, Rene, Robin, Sarah, Shana, Stephen, Lisa FL

01. Call to Order [9:05]

Jim R called to order the meeting of the Business Meeting Study Group, on the SMR Zoom account at 9:05 am Eastern, on Sept. 10th, 2023. We opened with the Serenity Prayer.

02. Call to Service The following attendees offered to be of service as:

- Meeting Chairperson - Jim R
- Recording Secretary – Lisa FL
- Timekeeper* - Stephen

(Record the meeting) **Not Recorded**

03. Statement of Purpose

***NEW* - To be composed and added for focus, clarity, and especially for newcomers to the Business Meeting Study**

04. Meeting Guidelines

***New* - Undiscussed, and needed, an brief statement reminding members how this gathering's members will conduct themselves. To be determined.**

05. Approval of the Minutes - Approved without objection

The minutes have yet to be posted to our website. They are found at: [MINUTES SMR Biz Study 23-9 Sept6](#). The minutes will not be read into the record. Participants may read the minutes and be prepared to voice any concerns.

- **09.10.23: Motion to Accept Minutes: Moved Shana, Seconded Vivienne, None opposed.**

06. Open issues (*Old Business*)

- a. **Co Chair.** A co chair for the SMR Business Meeting Study is desired. Those present were invited to consider assisting in directing and producing this Business Meeting Study as a co chair, along with Jim R.
 - **09.10.23: Lisa G and Vivienne both self-nominated to participate as Co-Chairs.**
- b. **Recommendations.** Can we make some recommendations for the group's new meeting practices?

Here are the concepts we determined were important recommendations to develop into proposal-style language:

1. Conduct business meetings on weekend days.
2. Maintain a 1 hour meeting limit. (*Possibly 30 -20 minutes?*)
3. Behavioral agreements. (*assistance from the Safety Group*)
4. Forgo the newcomer session on the day of the business meeting
 - a. Address the newcomer in the script
 - b. Offer options

These ideas are from the document, Ideas, concepts, suggestions and topics from recent meetings, which compiled the various ideas generated at recent meetings. The complete listing is found in **Appendix B**.

- **09.10.23: Discussion about which recommendation to focus on first. #1 selected.**
 - **#1 Motion to recommend that business meetings be moved to Sunday: Moved Stephen, Seconded Shana, Discussed weekend or weekday, Saturday or Sunday. No opposition to the motion.**
 - **#2 Motion to recommend limiting the length of business meeting to not extend beyond one hour: Moved Stephen, Seconded Lisa. Discussion to consider length to be much shorter than one hour. Decision deferred for future date.**
 - **Discussion NOTE: Additional meetings could be incorporated as needed**
 - **Discussion NOTE: Limit Intro (welcome/guidelines/readings/prayers) to set number of minutes.**
 - **#3 Discussion about behavioral agreements as related to keeping meeting on track (related to keeping at one hour).**

- c. **Purpose.** Question was raised around the purpose of a business meeting. A member offered a link to a World Service Organization published trifold, titled *Conducting A Business Meeting*. Link: [Conducting a Business Meeting EN_US A4.pdf \(adultchildren.org\)](https://www.adultchildren.org/~/media/World-Service-Organization/2019/04/Conducting_a_Business_Meeting_EN_US_A4.pdf)

This also led to reexamining the results of our recent survey which asked our members for their opinions, both about our business meetings' purpose and about the values we prize as a group. Here are the results of the survey: [SMR Biz Survey - 1.pdf](#)

Appendix A, below, notes earlier work that explored the opening of the Business Meeting script. The 'WELCOME' was set aside for discussion later, perhaps now

For future attention:

- d. **Ground Rules.** There was discussion about adding to the agenda/script for this meeting, some general guidelines noting our procedures (for example, raising our hand to speak) and our safety and comfort practices. These may be similar to those stated at our morning meeting.
- e. **Continued Surveying.** Would polling the SMR membership be part of that process?
We did not discuss fully our opportunities to continue surveying our members.

07. New business

- a.

08. Announcements

09. Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn 10:03 ET: Stephen; Seconded: Vivienne**
- **Closing prayer: Set Aside**
- **Next meeting: Sunday, Oct 4th at 9:00 am Eastern, after the morning meeting. Please use Slack to communicate between meetings. Let Jim know if you've not received an invitation.**
- **Minutes submitted by: Lisa FL**

Appendix A

NOTE; THE FOLLOWING WAS NOT EXPLORED AT OUR LAST MEETING

This was a suggestion for the opening of our business meeting script. The WELCOME sets the tone of the meeting. The wording was taken directly from the results of our survey, noted above. The WELCOME is offered sentence by sentence for our review and editing.

Attendees to the Study meeting were invited to suggest changes to the WELCOME offered below, sentence 3, is an example of how to suggest changes to the script:

Highlighted words indicate troubling word choice; perhaps vague, mistaken or triggering.
[Bracketed words] offer alternative word choices to be considered.
Underlined words indicate the main message of the sentence.

WELCOME:

1. "Welcome everyone to the business meeting of the *Strengthening My Recovery*, ACA meditation meeting.
2. My name is _____ , and I will be chairing the meeting.
3. By participating in the business meeting, we learn how to work together in a **healthy** manner. [courteous]
4. The purpose of the business meeting is to create a solid meeting maintenance process, with appropriate rules and clear boundaries.
5. Here at the meeting, we will be informed of the group's finances and of the various committee activities.
6. Our meeting members place a high value on **respect**, remaining mindful of our words and expressions as we avoid gossip and certain crosstalk.
7. We aim to maintain **safe spaces** in which all members are welcome to participate without, or in spite of, fear.
8. We set aside personal preferences in order to stand in **unity** with our group.
9. We value **transparency**, ensuring the membership is kept informed of organizational developments and upcoming proceedings.
10. And we value **focus**, so that the business at hand stays on-topic.

The suggestions were made that the WELCOME could reference the ACA Traditions, and that the language from the World Service, Annual Business Conference (pgs 8-10) as noted by the SMR Safety Working Group (May minutes), could be helpful. These references may fit in better in the RULES / GUIDELINES portion of the script.

Appendix B

Ideas, concepts, suggestions and topics from recent meetings

The following is a listing of most of the ideas captured at the recent Business Meeting Study sessions. While we have generated a lot of thoughts and concepts, we have yet to hammer out any suggestions to bring to the group.

Is it time to compile some business meeting recommendations?

Do we offer our suggestions/recommendations to the SMR meeting in small steps - offering small changes? Or do we create a business meeting package that is more complete?

Would we consider surveying the whole SMR membership?

This seems to be our ACA journey - creating an internal structure. Something beyond 'what is best for me'. We are entering into interdependent and aligned relationships, requiring creativity.

General areas of focus:

Business Meeting Timing

Business Meeting Purpose and Content

Business Meeting Position Description Reviews

Trusted Servant Elections

Business Meeting Scripts

Other

Business Meeting Timing

- Business meeting structure (when; how often)
- Work the Business meeting into the SMR meeting time slot instead of our regular format. Perhaps do this once, as a trial or test, to see how well it works. Poll the members.
- Have the business meetings on a weekend day.
- Forgo the newcomer session on the day of the Business meeting
- Alternate business meetings, month by month - reports one month / Group Conscience proposals the next month
- As to separating reports from proposals, what if a report naturally leads to a motion?
- Have a weekly business meetings to address the backlog of issues, such as one a week. Once addressed, we can have a fresh start for new ideas.
- Perhaps have longer, half-day business meetings, 4 times a year.
- Members could experience 'attention fatigue' if a meeting runs long.
- Let's note the benefits of a 1 hour meeting limit.
- Singular issue Group Conscience gatherings, focused on one proposal are successful.

Business Meeting Purpose and Content

- Issues about maintaining business focus/ timing discussions
- Process for proposing new ideas

- Outline for taking Minutes / creating Agenda
- Education - Explain how our business meetings operate
- Education - Explain to the newcomer
- What is the distinction between the terms 'business meeting' and 'group conscience'? Perhaps the group can choose to label our meetings **clearly**. Our group, from our inception, used the terminology 'group conscience' rather freely. According to the BRB, a 'group conscience' is the decisions of the group. A 'business meeting' is the way to a group conscience.

NOTE: In AA, a Group Conscience... Group Care... no motions, it's a discussion... not regularly scheduled. Single issue gatherings?, Called for a purpose...

Business Meeting Position Description Reviews

- Review Position Description (GC Chair) / qualifications / capable leadership
- Supports structures around rotation of service, such as tighter service descriptions and terms, and clear guidance and expectations around elections and overlapping of service for cross-training.

Trusted Servant Elections

- Suggest a regular election schedule.
- Invite more service-oriented conversations, volunteer opportunities, and fun activities (e.g., Sunday Service Day) around the Traditions in general, and not just structures and guidelines, in order to create safety and a healthy rotation of service.
- make the call to service be more personal.

Business Meeting Scripts

- Rules - important
- Safety. Clarity of business routine
- Accountability for inappropriate behavior
- That the Traditions be the Self-care reading for the day of our business meeting
- WSO ABC has guidelines about how we show up and treat each other in service.
- Schedule brief, meditative pauses in business meetings.
- A 'group conscience' invites a loving Higher Power into our decisions. Perhaps we could **actively** await a Higher Power response. Maybe a moment of silent meditation could be formatted into the business process, before soliciting votes.
- The 'Set Aside Prayer' could offer some guidance. Perhaps we could tailor that prayer for our own needs, becoming architects of a new business meeting format.
- Suggest a regular election schedule.

Other

- Figure out the process of submitting proposals/issues.
- Explore other models of doing business
- Website utilization / use technology more, such as online polling and voting.
- creating an "SMR Intergroup"- style committee, such as creating a delegation or board of trustees. Meetings could follow a quarterly retreat format and provide comprehensive

conversations around ongoing issues that are usually too long for regular business meetings.

- Support SMR field trips as a group, such as attending ACA workshops.
- Support retreats as a form of refreshment.
- Posting reports and proposals to our website ahead of our meetings.