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Trustee Line for February 2010

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From The Trustees

The subjects listed below are just a listing of themes that have been submitted by other Trustees. You may respond to any of them or start an entirely new subject

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Submit a response to the [Trustee Line](#) because of something you have read in this or any other issue.

Important Change to the GA Help Line

1/19/10 - 8:17 AM
Dear Trustees,

This past Friday the Board of Regents voted to turn control and oversight of the GA HELP LINE back over to the Board of Trustees.

As you may recall, the concept of the hotline was developed by a committee of the Board of Trustees. Once the concept was approved, it was turned over to the BOR for implementation and the BOR has been in charge of the hotline system since then.

Over the past two weeks I have had conversations with Benni F., chair of the BOR who was of the opinion that the BOR should no longer be involved. He advised me that his hope was that the BOR would vote to turn it back over to us.

I explained to Benni that I thought this should first be discussed by the BOT at our next meeting and I requested that his vote be held off until then. I felt that the BOT should have the opportunity to express it's wishes on this before any action was taken.

On Friday the BOR voted to turn complete oversight to the BOT no later than May 1, 2010. So, as Chairman of the BOT, I am forced with a decision. I suppose I could refuse to accept this action and wait for our meeting in May when you would have the chance to be heard.

My concern in doing so is that the hotline would then have no oversight or direction for that period of time. This is unacceptable to me.

Therefore, I feel compelled to accept the action of the BOR until such time of your collective voice can be heard.

In addition to this email, I have asked David M. to post this letter on the Trustee Line so that you have the opportunity to chime in on this if you wish.

Brother Denis
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Note from the Trustee Website Admin:

This topic was carried over to the February Trustee Line at the request of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to allow sufficient time for all interested Trustees, both past and present, to offer their thoughts and opinions.

1/19/10 - 1:07 PM

I am fully in favor of this change.

The BOR is no longer billed for any Hotline services by Erlang Communications. It is my understanding that there are no future plans, or need, for the BOR to be billed for any aspect of the operation of the Hotline (national or otherwise).

Each Intergroup, signed up for the Hotline, is under separate agreement with Erlang communications for the month to month cost and operation of their Hotline. Since the BOR is responsible for the financial operations of the ISO, and not individual or collective Intergroup finances, I see no reason for BOR to be responsible for the financial obligations of the Intergroups signed up for and using the Hotline.

In my opinion, this makes perfect sense.

Ed K. - Area 1 Trustee, Los Angeles

1/19/10 - 1:44 PM

I feel that the BOT should be in charge of the help line. We are the guardians of the program, and this should be part of our responsibility.

Kevin O. - Area 13, Maryland

1/19/10 - 3:27 PM

Hot Line, now its getting real Hot!

I was just thinking, maybe that's bad, but I was, I know the last Chair of the Hot line was conducting a survey on the cost of each Area. We never did get the results of that survey and reading between the lines, of minutes from the BOR, there will be not cost reduction, from Erlang Comm. Inc., from what they, the areas, are paying now and also all Areas paying the same rate per minute. Being that as it is, would the BOT after accepting the Hot Line back for the BOR, have the right to form a Committee to over see the Hot Line, and maybe try another company to get a lower rate, or would we have to give it back to the BOR?

Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina

1/19/10 - 5:24 PM

To my fellow Trustees:

A telephone "hot line" is an absolute, necessary, and critical function of our Program and Fellowship. I remind myself that our primary purpose is to help those who are still suffering from this horrible disease. In today's world, there are only a few basic tools of communication for those in desperate need: the telephone and the computer. We need to be available to those who need us - at any hour of any day. I feel like I am preaching to the choir, sorry.

It is unfortunate that the BOR feels as they do; but I can certainly understand their position. It IS our responsibility. The BOR is solely responsible for the operation of the ISO Office - not the groups within our Fellowship - this has been stated before. Therefore, we, as Trustees of this Fellowship have to decide if we care enough about our Program, our Fellowship, our Recovery and Step 12 to reach out to those in need and provide whatever experience, strength and hope we can provide - and if that is through a national/international hot line - so be it.

The ONLY concern I have today is the administration of such a system. We - in San Diego - have not been as fortunate as many of you have with our current system. We have made repeated telephone calls, written letters and notes and have been avoided and ignored time after time after time. In my opinion, this is unacceptable.....with any system. There MUST BE accountability and responsibility. We have been told by others - "tough - live with it." Well, to

me, this is not an acceptable attitude from any service provider....be it for G.A. or not. Even less so with G.A. since lives depend on our quick, loving, and understanding responses.

I like the idea of our BOT becoming more actively involved in our "hot line system." However, a thorough review, audit, research and plan MUST BE in place this time to make sure we are all treated equally and no favoritism is shown to any one person, or any one group. Principles before personalities. The administrator of such a system must be available, dependable, reliable, forthright and forthcoming with information, suggestions and ideas to make things work, or make things better. Who would be willing to take on such a dynamic challenge? Should it be one person, or a committee of dedicated individuals on whom we can depend and rely on? I do not have the answer. But these are definitely some of the questions I began asking myself today upon Denis M's announcement. Are there other questions I have not thought about yet? Is there another side of the coin that I have not looked at?

This, to me, is a very heavy decision - and one that we must give very serious consideration to - not taking on the "hot line system," I think that's a must - but rather the nuts and bolts and the administration of ANY program to be considered.

I appreciate your reading my thoughts and opinions.
With love, trust, faith and respect for our Fellowship
Linda S, Area 3A Trustee, San Diego

1/21/10 - 3:35 AM

The hotline needs a very active committee. Our area has had no response for repeated tries over the last couple of years to get a hold of Erlang. When I called and talked to Bennie a couple months ago he said I could go through him or Gary but it is all being taken care of and we don't need a contract - no area has one. Well, I guess the decision tells how it is. Yes we need to take it back. Can a committee be formed prior to Louisville?

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

Trustee Removal Process

2/1/10 - 12:01 AM

What is the prevailing opinion of Trustee being removed from their position at the Intergroup level?

The guidance code says a Trustee is automatically removed if they
a) admit to going back to gamble.
b) are absent from two Trustee meetings during their 2 year term.

This begs the question; Can an Intergroup impose requirements on a Trustee other than those of the Guidance Code for the purposes of the removal of a Trustee from their position?

Ed K. - Area 1 Trustee, Los Angeles

2/1/10 - 6:30 AM

Our Guidance Code also state that a Trustee may be removed for other acts on his or her part which are detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole. That statement can be more harming than the two Ed quoted. I just hope the committee for Removal Procedure's take this into account, and also since we, the intergroup, voted them in we also can vote them out. Joe B. - Area 6C, North Carolina & South Carolina

2/1/10 - 8:20 AM

In response to Ed K's comments on a Trustee being removed by an Intergroup. It is my understanding by reading our literature that presently the only way to remove a Trustee from office is by the two items you mentioned.

1) admission of gambling and
2) missing two consecutive BOT meetings.

The only other way I can see is for the Trustee to resign for whatever reason.

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee
2nd CoChair BOT

2/1/10 - 10:15 AM

True to form, yet another vague part in the Guidance Code has been picked up by Ed K. The section of the National Guidance Code that is the subject of this

part of the Trustee Line is Article VIII, Section 4. To save you some time, I have quoted it just below.

Any Trustee is automatically removed from office for gambling by his/her own admission. Current or past Trustees who return to gambling and subsequently come back to G.A. should not have a voice at the BOT meeting until they have 2 years of abstinence, the same qualification as becoming a Trustee. Gambling, for the compulsive gambler is defined as follows: Any betting or wagering, for self or others, whether for money or not, no matter how slight or insignificant, where the outcome is uncertain or depends upon chance or "skill" constitutes gambling. Or he or she may be removed for other acts on his or her part, which are detrimental to Gamblers Anonymous as a whole, or for not attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings. Removal requires 2/3 vote for expulsion by the Board of Trustees at the next physical meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Take a look at the wording in the first sentence. "Any Trustee is automatically removed from office..." Nowhere in the Guidance Code does it use the word 'ONLY' to designate that Article 4 is the only way to remove a Trustee. This section just emphatically shows an automatic set of conditions that would result in removal. As such, the matter can be left to the area that elected the Trustee(s) when it comes to other conditions of removal.

Having said that, I want to make sure that the last sentence is read by anyone looking at this posting. Removal requires a two-thirds vote. If the local area has it in its collective mind to remove a Trustee, I would strongly urge that the same vote margin be adopted for removal at the local level. What's more important, the local area MUST come up with a written set of requirements for the area to pursue the removal of a Trustee, which must include detailed procedures for the removal. Of course there is no writing on this subject or any guidelines from any of our literature, but we cannot have individuals going on a witch hunt, confusing a personal vendetta for a Trustee's inability to carry out his or her functions.

Having the written procedures in place and approved, also by a two-thirds majority, completely removes personalities from the equation. Many areas may find that they have non-workers representing them at the Trustee meetings. Why should any area have to wait the 2 years between elections if the area is thoroughly unhappy with the performance or commitment to the area.

As Joe B. said in his submission, the area elects the Trustees, the area should be able to remove them. Now if we can only carry that over to the Board of Regents, because the Trustees elect them also. I can only keep my fingers crossed that the BOR Procedural Review Committee will incorporate such procedures into the work they are doing.

David M. - Area 12, New Jersey

QRM Rules and Procedures Change
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2/1/10 - 8:36 AM

Hello Everyone,

Congratulations New Jersey on securing the 2011 Spring Conference.

As Chairman of the International Relations Committee I made an extra attempt to help the Trustees outside North America deal with the QRM by sending them an additional email explaining that it had to come by regular mail. The time window was tight for them because the mail travels slowly from their areas. I fully intend to submit an agenda item regarding this so we can move into the modern era and not rely solely on regular mail.

Happy New Year to all,

Steve R. - Chairman, GA Intl' Relations Committee
2nd Co-Chair GA Board of Trustees

Changes

2/4/10 - 4:05 AM

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year to all and I hope this email finds you all in good health. I have been researching three items for purposes of submitting agenda items on them. I would very much like to throw them out there for input, and hope I

get some response. One of them is very related to Herb B.'s New Business #6 agenda item.

As submitted it reads:

Guidance Code

6. - Guidance Code Change, Article VIII, Section 6

Current version: Two-thirds (2/3) or more members of the Board of Trustees present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum. Proxies shall be counted to determine the number present at any meeting for the purpose of a quorum.

Proposed Version: Two-thirds (2/3) or more members of the Board of Trustees, from the Continental USA and Canada, present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum. Proxies shall be counted from the Continental USA and Canada as well as absentee ballots from all over the world, to determine the number present at any meeting for the purpose of a quorum.

Herb B. - Area 5 Submitted - 10/21/09

I suggest the following be the proposed version:

"Two-thirds (2/3) or more members of the Board of Trustees present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum. Proxies and Absentee ballots from anywhere assigned by the BOT Chairman as well as physical attendance, from all Trustees in good standing shall be counted to determine the number present at any meeting for the purpose of a quorum."

My reasoning is that it shouldn't matter where you are from, whether "Proxies and Absentee ballots count for purposes of meeting a quorum", as long as they are assigned to another specific trustee properly by notifying the Chairman of the BOT in writing, email or fax prior to the meeting. Keeping in mind any attending Trustee can only have one Proxy or Absentee Ballot to cast.

Article 8 Section 21 makes the statement that "Absentee ballots and proxies from the BOT members from areas outside of the U.S.A. and Canada will count as attendance at the BOT physical meetings." That to me says that the "Absentee ballot should count for a quorum. Taking it further why shouldn't both the proxy and the Absentee Ballot count for the North American Trustee for purposes of a quorum?

And being me, I look to the extreme, and vision an area that can't afford to send a Trustee to a BOT meeting. Regardless of where they are from if they send in a Absentee Ballot they are showing participation to me. I do agree however, that it is all too easy to give a proxy up and not put any thought into an agenda. This thought addresses "attendance" though and would not be a part of the above item but rather a change to Article 8 section 21. This I may also submit but I would like to carefully review all our literature first on that subject.

My second item I am pursuing is a change to the way we respond to a QRM. My feelings are using regular "snail mail" is not efficient for our modern era. I was personally involved in trying to tell our International Trustees they had little time to get their response in the mail because the delivery time was so slow from their areas. Using just regular mail for them leaves very little window to respond. I propose in addition to regular mail that scanning an original ballot that is signed by the Trustee and submitting it by email or faxing a signed original to the I.E.S. in the proper 15 day response time also be allowed.

Rules and Procedures, #26, Quick Response Meetings, "Submitting Ballots" (bullet).

Present version:

"All responses should be sent to the ISO in a clearly marked envelope."

Proposed version:

"All responses sent by regular mail must be signed by the Trustee and sent to the ISO in an envelope clearly marked according to the instructions on the ballot. Original ballots signed by the Trustee, scanned and Emailed or Faxed to the I.E.S. at the I.S.O. will also be allowed. All Ballots must be received by the 15 day response deadline."

The third item I am pursuing is the wording in Article 8 Section 21 that says

Present Version:

"Any Trustee that misses (2) consecutive Board meetings is automatically removed from the Board of Trustees, and the area in which he or she serves shall be duly notified to elect a new Trustee."

Proposed version:

"Any Trustee that misses (2) consecutive Board meetings is automatically

removed from the Board of Trustees, and the area in which he or she serves shall be duly notified to hold an election for that vacant Trustee position.
....."

My thoughts on this are centering on the word "new". Some understand that to be a different person, others understand it to mean hold an election and fill the vacancy. Those who support the new person say that the old Trustee shouldn't be allowed to be re-elected again. I believe this borders on the BOT telling Intergroups who they can elect and who they can't. That is not what we on the BOT are about. The dismissed Trustee, provided he or she is still meeting the necessary requirements to be a Trustee, in my opinion still is qualified to run for position again. No where in our literature does it say someone who meets the qualifications to become a Trustee can't run for that position. Where this issue belongs is with the Intergroup and groups of that area. They will be aware of the circumstances causing the Trustee to be removed from the BOT. By holding another election they have decision to either re-elect the member or choose another member depending on the number of nominations. I truly believe this issue belongs at the group and Intergroup level.

I thank you all for your time in reading this and wonder how many of you thought this was a David M. entry because of the length of it..... just kidding :-), got to have a little humor here and I actually asked David for his opinion prior to posting this.

Looking forward to Louisville in May and hope the bullseye is off my chest!

One Day at a Time

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee
2nd Co-Chairman BOT

50 Year History Book

2/12/10 - 7:58 PM
Hello Fellow Trustees,

Some of you may be wondering why I motioned to table item # 38 from the Montreal Agenda last October. "Discuss the feasibility of making the 50 year history book approved G.A. literature." This item passed the Merit Vote at Kansas City BOT Meeting in the spring of 2009.

I neglected to bring any copies of the book to Montreal and felt that the newer Trustees either completely wouldn't know what was being addressed or would not have even seen the book. Therefore I made the decision to table and bring a few copies to Louisville so those Trustees could at least see it before a vote was taken.

Briefly, for those Trustees in that category it was a 532 page book compiled over three years and given to each attendee of the 50th GA Anniversary Conference in Los Angeles, California in October of 2007. 85% of all the bulletins published by the GSO/NSO/ISO were collected and used as reference material as well as individual contact with literally hundreds of members from around the world recreating the first meetings in over fifty countries and all the States in the USA. 1100 plus attendees received copies as well as an additional 200 plus which were sold at the conference.

I had obtained a quote from the original publisher for approximately \$10 a book for a quantity of 500. The excess books at the conference sold out at \$20 a book meaning if 250 were sold anything after that would be profit to the ISO.

I will have a few copies on hand in Louisville for those of you who have not seen it. Maybe someone in your area has one that you can borrow to preview also to save some time.

Thanks for your time and I will see you all in Kentucky soon.

Steve R. - Area 2B Trustee
2nd Co-Chairman BOT

2/19/10 - 11:11 AM

Just to let the trustees know that there is an interest, I have been asked by a few people in Area 9 when the 50 year history book will be available. This is without an inquiry from me. Trustees may want to see how many people in their area are waiting to buy a copy. This may help with the decision to approve it and with how many we should buy initially. Also, as the book is so

heavy, what would the shipping cost?

Carol K. - Area 9, Michigan

Rolling Agenda Item 22 on Trustee Removal

2/17/10 - 10:58 AM

Hello Everybody

I am truly puzzled

I've read and heard from trustees on the "removal" issue-

Please tell me why we should allow someone to be a trustee who does not want to participate--

All it takes is to make a written response or if really lazy give a proxy

Why in the world should we accept a reelection of someone who missed TWO meetings in a row--(maybe they didn't have \$0.44) maybe they didn't like the agenda

If the BOR sets requirements for being a trustee then that's what the requirements are until they are changed.

84 trustees answered the QRM-was that a quorum?-about 60%

12 Trustees are now off the board because they missed two meetings in a row

Count the unfilled positions -Areas that just do NOT elect-for many reasons money the biggie (of course they can still say \$.044 is too much)

What if only 50 trustees had responded to the QRM ?

For those of you who do not know me I am an impatient procrastinator.and I'm not too happy when we spend so much time on changing a word.

I do not think One physical meeting per yr is enough-we don't have time to properly finish one.the last items on the agendas do not get a fair shake-lack of attendance-time running out- tiredness-boredom--etc, etc.

I thought that the 20 questions were for every member not just the new folks.

Why do we have so many conferences on top of one another ?

When will we have a physical meeting somewhere besides Canada or USA ??

Why is it okay for local areas to combine funds -Gamblers Anonymous & Gamanon-??

Just thought I would get some of my thoughts down-I've got more but a few at a time is easier for everyone.

Love to all

Bill B. - Area 15, New York City
