

Virginia, Area 57

Town Hall: Transforming Electronic Groups to AFGs

March 27, 2022 2:00 to 4:00 pm, via WebEx

Taskforcequestions@vaalanon.org

Task Force Members:

Terry Woodside, VA Area Delegate, Panel 59

Stacy Lewis, VA Area Delegate, Panel 62

Tom Spillman, VA Area Chairperson, Panel 59

Debbie Polston, VA Area Chairperson, Panel 62

Chris Batchelder, VA Area Group Records Coordinator, Panel 59

Cheryl Lee, VA Area Group Records Coordinator, Panel 62

Agenda

Task Force Status Report *(print in italic was previously reported)*

1. *Oct. 17, 2021, the VA Area Assembly approved the motion to create a Task Force to develop a Policy for the VA Area to accommodate the Transformation of Electronic Groups to AFGs, which will happen after the World Service Conference (WSC) admits the new Electronic Area in April 2022.*
2. *The Task Force has set up an email account for questions, comments, and feedback from VA Area members to the Task Force - Taskforcequestions@vaalanon.org*
3. *The Task Force members agreed on the following guidelines for writing the new Policy:*
 - a. *Keep the Policy as broad as possible.*
 - i. *Avoid making it a governing document.*
 - ii. *Make sure it is compliant with our Three Legacies.*
 - b. *Respect the autonomy of our Groups, Districts, and the Area as much as possible.*
 - c. *Recognize that the Policy may need to be adjusted as implementation proceeds.*
4. *The Task Force members reviewed the following areas to remain in compliance with as the policy was being written:*
 - a. *VA Area Bylaws*
 - b. *Alateen Behavioral and Safety Guidelines*
 - c. *Group Records, Web Page, and Communication Coordinator procedures*
 - d. *Anonymity protection*
 - e. *Voting guidelines – how to address groups' and districts' concerns about voting members residing outside the state of VA, including:*
 - i. *Hotel contract obligations*
 - ii. *VA Area Assembly budget for GR/DR scholarships*
 - iii. *District and Group budgets for sending voting members to VAWSC and Assembly*
 - f. *WSC and WSO requirements and their implementation timelines*
 - g. *The conclusion was that we saw no red flags in the areas, listed in e above.*

5. After reviewing the comments and feedback from the Town Hall of Nov. 7, the Task Force learned the following:
 - a. We can rely on group and District autonomy to solve problems related to transforming electronic groups more than we originally thought.
 - b. VA Area members do not seem to be much in favor of moving all electronic meetings to an overlay style district. (See the Service Manual, p. 65-66, for definition of Overlay District).
 - c. The matter of financing out-of-state representatives to attend Assemblies and VAWSC meetings can be relegated to groups and Districts to solve, providing that the Area sets guidelines as to what it can and cannot do, i.e. assure that Assemblies will be either virtual or hybrid going forward; and what the Area can and cannot afford for scholarships.

6. The Task Force started writing the new policy after the Nov. 7 Town Hall, taking into consideration what we learned from the VA Area members.
 - a. The first draft of the new Policy was presented at the Jan. 8, 2022 Incoming/Outgoing Officer meeting and was approved to advance to the March 5 VAWSC meeting.
 - b. The VAWSC meeting voted to approve the new Policy and recommend to the 2022 Spring Assembly that the Group Representatives approve it, making it Policy for the Virginia Area.
 - c. The March 27, 2022 Town Hall was planned to allow for all Group Representatives, District Representatives, and any interested Virginia Area member to participate in a discussion of the new Policy in advance of the vote at the May 14-15, 2022 Spring Assembly.

7. The new Policy consists of:
 - a. An Introduction describing the background and reasoning for creating a new Policy.
 - b. VA Area Guidelines for:
 - i. Outside Electronic meetings wishing to join the VA Area
 - ii. Inside the VA Area meetings wishing to leave the VA Area and join the new Electronic Area.
 - iii. Inside the VA Area meetings wishing to change from F2F status to virtual or hybrid status.
 - iv. Guidelines for scholarship for GRs/DRs who live outside of the state of VA.

Background Information: Electronic Meetings and AFGs:

Electronic Meetings, as defined by the 2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, v.2, p. 88-89.

Electronic Meetings	AFGs
<i>Do not have GRs</i>	<i>Entitled to elect a GR</i>
<i>Are not part of the World Service Conference Structure, Chart p. 171, Service Manual</i>	<i>Are included in the World Service Conference Structure, Chart p. 171</i>
<i>Have a meeting contact addressee (CMA) only</i>	<i>Must have a CMA to register</i>
<i>Register directly with the WSO only</i>	<i>Register with the WSO via the DR and the VA Area Group Records Coordinator</i>
<i>Meeting information is posted on the WSO Website only, under 'Members' menu</i>	<i>Meeting information is posted on websites of the WSO, the VA Area, and a Service Center, if applicable</i>

In April 2021, the World Service Conference (WSC) passed 2 motions.

1. *The first motion changed the status of Electronic Meetings to AFGs.*
 - a. *This was achieved by amending the Service Manual to eliminate any reference to defining an Area by geography.*
 - b. *So, now an Area is not defined as a specific geographic area.*
2. *The second motion allows for all Electronic Meetings to form a new Electronic Area.*
 - a. *All Electronic Meetings that are now **new** AFGs automatically become members of the new Electronic Area.*
 - b. *At the April 2022 WSC, the new Electronic Area may petition the WSC to join as the 68th Area.*
3. *After the new Electronic Area becomes a member of the WSC, any now **new** AFG may petition any of the other 67 geographic Areas to join their Area, if the **new** AFG chooses.*
 - a. *The VA Area needs a policy to manage any changes in the VA Area that this process brings.*

Questions and Comments from VA Area members:

For more information on the new Policy, as well as the link for the Town Hall, on the VA Area website: go to www.vaalanon.org.

Questions, comments? Send them to: taskforcequestions@vaalanon.org