

## FOR PUBLICATION TO ISO OF COSA WEBSITE

### Biannual Delegate Meeting ISO of COSA Board and Delegates

#### Meeting Notes

Sunday, November 17, 2024

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Hawaii, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Pacific, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Mountain, 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Central, 1:00 pm – 6:00 p.m. Eastern, 5:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. GMT/UTC

#### **CONVENE MEETING, SERVICE ROLES, AND WELCOME:**

Our Outreach and Vice-Chair facilitated the delegate meeting today. She welcomed all delegates, gave a general overview of the meeting agenda, shared instructions for using the chat function, introduced certain attendees who would be playing a role such as collecting votes, organizing sharing order on voting matters, note taking, time keeping, keeping video on whenever possible, and other meeting guidelines.

- Serenity Prayer
- Twelve Steps
- Twelve Traditions
- Twelve Concepts

General notes: LitCom = Literature Committee, TechCom = Technology Committee, DL = Delegate Liaison, ConCom = Convention Committee, CITK = COSAs in the Know, NomCom = Nominating Committee

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BOARD, DELEGATES, AND OBSERVERS**

##### **Board:**

Chair  
Vice-Chair/Outreach Chair  
LitCom Liaison, also SC-01  
TechCom Liaison, also ONL-41  
Treasurer  
Secretary  
Board Member D

##### **Those with Supporting Roles:**

Delegate Liaison, also ONL-69  
Parliamentarian, also TX-43/ONL-59

##### **Delegates:**

TX-22  
TEL-12

FL-15  
ONL - 10  
AZ-10  
ONL-74  
ONL-37  
WI-08  
INT-32  
TN-06  
CA-18  
ONL-68  
CA-09  
ONL-11  
CA-28  
CA-23  
ONL-20  
TX-23/ONL-58  
CA-01  
TEL-01  
CA-13/ONL-63  
ONL-12  
TEL-08  
CA-29  
CO-04

**Observer:**

TEL-01 Observer

**REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS:**

Guidelines for Voting and Participation  
ISO of COSA Safe Communications Procedures

**CONCEPT STUDY ON CONCEPT TWELVE:**

*The Annual Meeting shall observe the spirit of COSA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.*

**EXPLANATION OF BOARD NOMINATION PROCESS AND BOARD NOMINEE**

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

This process includes reviewing applications submitted by individuals. We encourage people NOT to wait, or to be asked, or to be nominated. They can nominate themselves for service. The Nominating Committee reviews an applicant's paperwork, then we individually interview

both the candidate and their sponsor. Next, as a committee, we determine if this is the right time for this candidate to enter board service, or if they should wait a while. At that point, we make a recommendation to the board in regards to bringing that candidate to the delegates for a vote.

### **PROSPECTIVE BOARD NOMINEE: COSA K INTRODUCES HERSELF**

### **VOTE ON PROSPECTIVE BOARD NOMINEE**

### **RESULTS OF BOARD ELECTIONS**

**COSA K was elected to serve a two-year term on the ISO of COSA Board, starting with the November 17, 2024, Biannual Delegate Meeting.**

### **REVIEW OF FRIENDLY AMENDMENT PROTOCOLS:** Chair:

In the order of voting, there's an initial vote. Then people may share; that's the time when friendly amendments can be made. The amendment can either be accepted or rejected by the original proposer. To keep with our procedure, we will have our initial vote.

### **PROPOSAL:**

**We will allow flyers and other information graphics for ISO-approved regional COSA events to be published in official COSA communications (COSA In the Know emails, *The Balance*, and website for example) during years without an official in-person ISO COSA Convention.**

Background shared by Chair: Back in 2014, the *Balance* was mailed; it was quite expensive to include more info. Also back in 2014, web capabilities were much less than they are now. This proposal is made by me: (COSA J), and is NOT a board proposal, or acting in my board position as Chair.

**VOTE on Proposal: We will allow flyers and other information graphics for ISO-approved regional COSA events to be published in official COSA communications (COSA In the Know emails, *The Balance*, website for ex.) during years without an official in-person ISO COSA.**

Note: Observers will go to a breakout room during voting.

**VOTE: RED 7, YELLOW 14, GREEN 12      Motion does NOT pass.**

**FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: COSA J is already giving her friendly amendment, in case those speaking for RED or YELLOW were going to talk about things that are addressed here.**

**"We will allow flyers and informational graphics for COSA events to be published in official COSA communications (COSAs In the Know emails, *The Balance*, website for examples).**

**Flyers for non-ISO COSA events published in official COSA communications must include the disclaimer "The International Service Organization (ISO) of COSA provides this information as a courtesy to facilitate the exchange of information about local COSA activities.**

*These events are not endorsed by the ISO of COSA. Lack of endorsement does not mean the ISO of COSA opposes the event but rather clarifies that it is not an ISO event.”*

Speaking for Red: Delegate: Personally, I would vote to approve the proposal, but someone in my group doesn't like too many graphics, another felt the language referencing the ISO convention every other year was confusing during the original proposal. I did tell them there would be a friendly amendment likely addressing the confusing language, but they still were very divided.

Speaking for Red: Delegate: The text in the chat does not include the parenthetical content that lists the different official communications. Will that actually be part of the proposal, or are you removing it?

Response: Those parts will still be there; I was just trying to quickly type.

Delegate: Could we please place a small lowercase s after the word COSA, so it reads “COSAs In the Know”?

Response: Yes, it's there now.

Speaking for Red: TechCom Liaison and Delegate: A meeting I was attending suggests simplifying that disclaimer to a shorter phrase: The ISO of COSA neither endorses nor opposes this event.

Speaking for Green: No one has asked to speak for Green.

Speaking for Yellow: Delegate: It says we will allow flyers and informational graphics for COSA events. I don't know if you're intending to make a distinction between the ISO-sponsored events, which would be our conventions, and other recovery events that are listed under the tab on the website. That's unclear to me. I can suggest other wording: We will allow flyers and informational graphics for non-ISO sponsored events, alternatively for other recovery events listed on the website.

Speaking for Yellow: Board Member D: I'm assuming you did take out the section about “every other year”.

Response: COSA J: I heard two additional friendly amendments. One was about shortening the disclaimer, and I think I can address your issue, Delegate. The purpose of this proposal is to allow graphics, because currently they are not allowed, whether it's for the ISO official convention or other events. Right now, there isn't a distinction. This proposal would allow graphics for both.

Speaking for Yellow: Delegate: What about logos? Let's say there is a joint event with another fellowship. Are we putting their logo on our website? I love the idea of flyers, but we may need additional guidance for logo content.

Response: COSA J: Anything that's posted anywhere, (for ex: our website, CITK, the *Balance*), must go through a review process. At that point, if a graphic doesn't meet up with our requirements, it would be eliminated because we don't affiliate with any other organization, such as SAA. I don't think that belongs in our proposal, because the proposal is just to allow graphics that facilitate the exchange of information about COSA activities.

COSA J accepts the friendly amendments with re-wording.

## **SECOND VOTE:**

**We will allow flyers and informational graphics for COSA events to be published in official COSA communications (COSAs In the Know emails, The Balance, website for example).**

**Flyers for non-ISO COSA events published in official COSA communications must include the disclaimer: The ISO of COSA neither endorses nor opposes this event. This information is only to facilitate the exchange of information about COSA activities.**

**VOTE: RED 1, YELLOW 2, GREEN 31      Motion Passes**

### **MEETING UPDATE TASK FORCE:**

Delegate: A group of us has been working to update our list of meetings. As of November 10, we had 148 meetings listed, of which 103 have been updated. These meetings are composed of meetings that are: telephone, Intergroup, online, international, face-to-face, and hybrid. Our plans for updating the remaining meetings: we will send out another round of emails, and make telephone calls if we can find a contact person for that meeting. If we are unable to update, we will reach out to an Intergroup if one exists in that area. We will also do outreach to local COSAs who may know, or who can check in on the meeting in question. We will also ask in our official COSA publications, (CITK and the *Balance*) to see if anyone has information on those meetings for additional guidance. We would also ask Outreach to email lists that the ISO maintains, (example delegate emails). If anyone has any additional suggestions for other ways, please let us know. At the next (Biannual) Delegate Meeting, we will bring a list of meetings that we've been unable to contact in order to get delegate approval before removing them from the website listings.

### **COMMENTS ON MEETING UPDATE TASK FORCE:**

Delegate: As of November 2023, we had 162 meetings listed. Now as of November of this year, we have 148 meetings. We have had several updates come back to say meetings were not active anymore. When we can confirm that the meetings are inactive, they are removed from the listing.

Chair: At least for online or phone meetings, a last-ditch effort would be to just attend them.

Delegate: Is there a way we can update a meeting without having to update every tiny thing about it?

Response: Right now, the huge effort is to update all of the existing meetings. It's been so long since they were updated. We will still be recommending meetings be updated on an annual basis. We will be looking at that process. Right now, we are doing our best.

Delegate: If we haven't received any information from meetings despite these steps to contact, will the delegates be given that final okay to remove them?

Response: That's correct. Our goal is to bring that list to our next (Biannual) Delegate Meeting.

Delegate: I'm willing to attend meetings that still need to be updated if you'll send me a list.

Delegate: When I'm able, I'm willing to attend meetings that are within 50 miles of me.

**OTHER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES—COMMITTEES:** Committee chairs will take the opportunity to share about their committees, and explain how members can serve.

**Literature Committee:** LitCom Chair      [litcom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@cosa-recovery.org)

Since our book *COSA Recovery* launched on March 4<sup>th</sup>, over one thousand copies have been sold. Please take the message back to your meetings: LitCom doesn't have an off-season. We publish *Balance* six times per year. Every week we are editing and polishing up articles for our

weekly CITK. We edit anything that comes to us for review, whether it goes on our website or something that will be printed. Helping Professionals look at our website, so we want to make sure they see a professional-looking website, so Editorial Review is a big part of what we do on everything we touch. We also create new literature and polish up the board's monthly meeting summaries, and delegate meetings. We're busy and always need more writers and editors. Now that our *COSA Recovery* book is complete, we are writing a companion workbook. We need field testers who would actually complete the questions, and work the exercises, then fill out a survey. We are also doing a literature refresh. We have a new online tool for you to be able to sign up and write for the *Balance* newsletter, to pick the particular Step, Tradition, Concept, tool, etc. where you can contribute your ESH. Go to the "Ways to Be of Service" tab. If you don't want to write, there's all sorts of other ways you can help: artwork, pictures, poems, songs.

### **COMMENTS:**

Board Secretary: You don't need to be an accomplished writer. I'm a retired math teacher, NOT a language arts teacher. This committee polishes up what I write.

Board Member D: On that tab where a person can pick a particular Step or tradition, if something has already been chosen, would we be notified that it's no longer available?

Response: Yes, we won't let an opportunity slip through our fingers. Possibly your writing could be used during the next year. You'd be notified. This whole extra project of picking topics came about from two COSAs having a cup of coffee, saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if...".

LitCom Chair: We also need administrative support, people who can attend a meeting, take notes, and create a summary. We need email directors. You don't have to be a writer or editor. You just have to be willing to give service. LitCom meets once per month. A great deal of work gets done over email. Please contact me at the email listed above if you can help LitCom in any way.

**OUTREACH COMMITTEE:** Outreach and Vice-Chair: [outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org)

We help to carry the message forward. We've also collaborated with LitCom to get more literature into our hands, such as Meeting in a Bag, and Retreat in a Bag.

### **COMMENTS:**

Delegate: For tele-meetings, there may be some who don't have much knowledge or access to the internet. I recall we had some ideas that we might be able to provide some booklets or the book for people needing resources.

Response: Yes. There are grant monies that are available. If there is a special situation, just contact me at the above email, and we will try to find ways to support them.

Outreach and Vice-Chair: A question came in asking what does outreach currently do right now to carry the message forward? For example, grant applications, and can people find this on the website? Yes, there is a tab under "Resources" for Outreach Scholarships and Grants. Internationally, we are attempting to support meetings, Intergroups, and non-English speaking groups. The status is ongoing for translating materials. We did hire someone to finish the translations, but that has been a slow process. Once it is completed, we hope to have people who are willing to edit, because of the different dialects.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** COSA MJ [nominations@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:nominations@cosa-recovery.org)

Maybe YOU are interested in board service. Here are the prerequisites for an ISO level of service. You need to: have a sponsor or co-sponsor, have worked all Twelve Steps with a sponsor or in a step group, and have studied all the Traditions, preferably with a sponsor or a group. You can speak to one of the board members, or contact us at the above email. Please know that you don't need to be nominated by another COSA. If you're interested in serving, please contact us. If you're interested in joining this committee, our make-up states that one member who is not a present or former board member may be included.

### **COMMENTS:**

Chair: The board has a minimum requirement number of seven people. We can have up to twelve. All of COSA relies on volunteers. Currently we are one person away from not functioning, so it's really important to join the board. It's a huge growth opportunity. If you think that you don't know what role you should fill, that's okay. You don't have to come with a pre-designated job you want to do. We need people. We need input. We need variety. If you don't feel it's a right fit for you, maybe there is someone in your group; give them a nudge.

Board Member D: One or two actually have to leave the board in less than a year, so we will be really needing board members soon.

Delegate: I want to add that my board service helped me to grow so much in my recovery. A person doesn't need to have any special talents to be on the board. There are also non-board positions such as Committee Chairs, Delegate Liaisons, etc. that need help. If you want to acquaint yourself with ISO service without jumping on the board right away, this might be something to look at.

TechCom Liaison and Delegate: Yes, this has amped up my recovery. I like to say that I do the Steps so I have a better relationship with myself, the Traditions so I have a better relationship with other people, and the Concepts so that I have a good relationship with my organization.

### **CONVENTION COMMITTEE:**      [convention@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:convention@cosa-recovery.org)

Treasurer: There were several people who wanted to be on the Virtual Convention Committee. They completed a survey, and we have some positions filled. I had volunteered to be chair of the Virtual Convention, but unfortunately, I have to step away from that. We will need a chair. If you are interested in helping out, please send an email to the above address. The Chair will be getting those emails, so you will receive an answer. We do raise approximately \$2,000 for every virtual convention that we have, as it is free to attend, but we do have a suggested \$15 donation.

### **COMMENTS:**

Delegate: Do we have a date set for the virtual convention?

Response: No, not as of yet. It had been suggested to take place between February and March, but there is no firm date. It was my suggestion to the committee that there be an Action Item list, so everyone could see things that need to be done. It's a great way to run a committee. I also want to tell newcomers: You are very useful and helpful to us all: sharing in meetings, asking questions helps us all.

Chair: I want to clarify that the survey that was sent out in September/October was about in-person conventions. It is not about a survey that was sent out in regards to the Virtual Convention.

**TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE:** TechCom Liaison and Delegate: [techcom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:techcom@cosa-recovery.org)  
or [webmaster@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:webmaster@cosa-recovery.org)

TechCom needs help. We need people to be Zoom hosts and timers, give feedback on what challenges they have with using the website, make suggestions for changes to our website, and to step up so our resources aren't spread so thin.

**COMMENTS:**

LitCom Liaison and Delegate: What are the specific skills needed for TechCom?

Response: It could be anything from someone helping to test a survey; you'd need a computer and some simple skills like keyboarding. You can contact us at one of the above addresses to see where your skill set would fit.

Delegate: Working to update the meeting list, and keeping it updated is also part of TechCom. The thing is that you could be part of this committee in some fashion either permanently, or temporarily.

Delegate: We rarely meet on Zoom for this committee. Most communication is done via emails. I do a lot of work on the database and use Microsoft. We will take ANY amount of time that you can give to help us.

Delegate: Would you provide training if someone wanted to fill a particular role?

Response from TechCom Liaison and Delegate: Yes! We will give you the training you need.

**General Comment from LitCom Liaison and Delegate: This is true for ANY of the Committees, or Board positions. We will train you. If you need to contact us, please go to the website Resource tab. You'll find "Contact Us".**

**FINANCIAL QUESTIONS:** Treasurer: [budfincom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:budfincom@cosa-recovery.org)

**REGARDING THE BALANCE SHEET AS OF JUNE 30, 2024:** Treasurer:

Normally, we have our Delegate Meeting before the end of our fiscal year, so you would have voted on the previous fiscal year's statements. This year, our Delegate meeting was June 29, 2024, and our fiscal year didn't end until June 30, 2024. I was trying to show as much as was available until that point. So now that our fiscal year has ended, we can look back at July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. The statement shown shows the following which includes our prudent reserve—our "in case" money, so we won't ever be caught short.

Total assets	\$136,650
Total liabilities	\$61,204
Total equity	\$75,446

**[BALANCE SHEET AS OF JUNE 30, 2024.pdf](#)**

**REGARDING THE PROFIT AND LOSS BY MONTH FOR JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024:** Treasurer:

Total Income	\$53,341	Includes: total convention donations, income from registration, seventh tradition, automatic recurring donations, donations from groups (meetings),
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donations from individuals, literature sales from our website, and Amazon sales (book).

Total Expenses \$39,261

Includes: board expenses, convention supplies, convention expense, Outreach Committee, COSA committees, office expenses, trademark renewal, payroll, technology fees.

Net Operating \$14,080

Treasurer: Please note that some of our convention expenses were paid in July. We do our best to make sure things are in the right categories, but we will be working on some different presentation styles.

### [PROFIT AND LOSS BY MONTH FOR JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024.pdf](#)

### **REGARDING OUR BUDGET VS. ACTUALS FOR JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025:** Treasurer:

We are one-third through our fiscal year. We are actually a little ahead on donations so far. Our website fees have gone up, and we did pay for some previous years, as the TechChair had paid for some expenses from his personal account, and needed reimbursement. You'll see our total income is (- \$2,700). We paid the hotel extra as per our contract. So as of October 31, we've lost money. I'm very happy that COSA K is now on the board, she is very much attuned to QuickBooks. We are going to try to move to an accrual basis, and to work our budget better in the future.

### [BUDGET VS. ACTUALS FOR JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2024.pdf](#)

### **QUESTIONS ON FINANCIALS:**

Delegate: At the in-person convention time, I was alerted that we didn't meet our minimum number of rooms required, so there was a large unexpected expense. Initially we were to have seen all of these statements at this Delegate Meeting, and not as a part of a question-and-answer format. Why didn't we know about those unoccupied rooms at convention time so we could address that issue?

Response: The Hotel contract was signed in September, 2023, for the June, 2024, convention. We were obligated by those terms. We could not have changed the number of rooms that were in the contract signed nine months earlier.

COSA in chat: Will these reports be on the website?

Response: Yes. What you had was actually more up to date than normal years. I should have just given you 2023 – 2024. What you had was the information we could produce at the time, because the meeting occurred before the fiscal year end. The information I'm giving right now is the most current information with the updated budget as requested. The Budget and Finance Committee will look to see what is the best timing for it, and we will defer to our tax preparer.

Delegate and Tax Preparer: I want to make everyone aware that the preliminary financials that our Treasurer has shown, and will be posted along with the meeting notes, are not necessarily what's going to be voted on next year because those financials need to be reviewed, and could be changed, and presented a little differently. I don't want people to be upset if they're not exactly what is being shown here, as that's not the way the accounting function works.

LitCom Liaison and Delegate: This is not a true financial report we are voting on, it's just a final compilation of the report.

Delegate: Thanks, Treasurer, for all of the work you've done. I think people forget we are volunteers.

Comment in Chat: Regarding the 23-24 financial report, I'd like to know when the complete financial report for the fiscal year 23-24 will be presented to the delegates as an official agenda item for our review. The financial report was supposed to be presented at the Delegate Meeting on June 29, 2024. We were assured that it would be presented at the next Delegate Meeting on Nov 17. It's essential to highlight that the fiscal report presented at the last Delegate Meeting on June 29 did not include the expenses or income for June, just before the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2024. This timing forced us to approve the fiscal year conclusion without complete information for June, as it had not been calculated. We were informed that a thorough financial overview for 2023-2024 would be available at today's November 17th Delegate Meeting. During the town hall meeting on November 9, it was acknowledged that the updated Financial Reports we were promised had either been overlooked or were not submitted within the required 30-day period before the November 17 meeting. As a result, we were told that we would have the opportunity to review these reports only during the Q and A session of the Delegate Meeting. This situation hinders our ability to document crucial details in the official minutes. Other attendees also voiced their frustration regarding this issue. As a delegate, I firmly call upon our board to include significant business items to be documented accurately according to our meeting procedures and sound accounting practices. I am concerned that an approved business item that did not appear on the agenda (two official Delegate Meetings in a row: June 29, 2024, and Nov 17, 2024) undermines its importance within the democratic processes of our Delegate Meeting. Just because this practice has continued for the past 20 years does not justify it. We are responsible for ensuring accountability to our COSA members, especially during our official Delegate Meetings.

## **DELEGATE QUESTIONS/CONCERNS/COMMENTS:**

### **REGARDING IN-PERSON CONVENTIONS:**

Submitted Question: What are the plans regarding an in-person convention?

During the November 7th town hall meeting the board chair mentioned that the recent convention survey indicated support for holding an ISO convention every other year with smaller ISO-sponsored retreats in the intervening years. Did I understand correctly that this change will take effect immediately for the 2025 summer convention? Shouldn't the next step be to utilize the info gathered, and discuss this matter first at the following Delegate Meeting? Therefore, a proposal must be presented, voted on, and decided as the next step in delegates' democratic process before changing the sequence of the summer in-person conventions. For over 30 years COSA has had annual convention meetings in person, (except for the virtual meetings during the pandemic). Changing to every other year, even though info from the survey appeared to favor it, doesn't mean that the board could change this without approval from the delegates. The delegates represent the hundreds of members of their respective meetings. The survey can be seen as added information and data to help decide before an official change is made.

Response from Chair: There was a survey sent out, and a summary of that was published. At the last in-person Houston convention, there were approximately 110 people attending. Then along came COVID, there was not an in-person convention for two years. In 2022, we resumed the in-person conventions with about 24 people attending in 2022, 41 people attending in 2023, and 33 people attending in 2024. Online attendance is amazing. We've had between 200 and 400 members attending in those years [editor's note: at virtual events]. In that survey, the majority of people felt that the most important thing was to carry the message forward, and as long as losses weren't extravagant, we should have in-person conventions. As a board, we have to balance that with fiscal responsibility. In Atlanta, we lost about \$6,000 and Columbus lost between \$9,000 and \$10,000. We can't sustain that on a regular basis unless our donations increase significantly. So, we do have to take those finances into consideration. In that survey, more than half of those responding preferred to have in-person conventions every other year, or every third year. A majority felt that regional or local events were more beneficial to the fellowship and to the individual. Also, I'd add that it's difficult to put on a convention. It takes a lot of people power. We ARE doing an online convention every year; I want to make that clear. There was a question of why this was not put to a delegate vote. When this survey was published, and followed up with updated responses, there were links for people to make comments. We had also had a delegate town hall addressing this. There was no indication that the delegates were uncomfortable with the process. Those surveys and quarterly update meetings are all about collecting data. These Delegate Meetings are about getting permission. The survey had 145 people responding. Today's Delegate Meeting has 34 in attendance, and I'm guessing that 3 or 4 are not actual delegates. They are observers or board members. So today, 20% of the meetings are represented. The survey gave voice to people who might not have an active delegate at their meeting. The ISO does have a process to do what it thinks best with the information that's given, especially regarding certain things for committees. So, for example, the Convention Committee does not get a delegate vote for when a convention might take place, the location, speakers, etc. They do not get that input from the delegates. That's not a "get permission" kind of thing. And whether to have one convention or two conventions, (where one is a virtual convention) is likewise not a delegate-directed decision. The only time a specific question about the convention was brought to the delegates was in 2019 when there was a proposal written by the Houston Intergroup to allow COSA to have a convention that didn't align with SAA's convention. That was voted down because the delegates felt that was not something that should be dictated to the Convention Committee. It was felt that ConCom had the autonomy to make those decisions without going to the delegates.

Delegate: When I was on the board 10 years ago, this kind of decision would have been brought to the delegates. I think there's been a kind of "unevenness" in what the board has brought to delegates for approval and what the board has decided is in their purview. I'm a little worried about our Traditions and Concepts in that lack of clarity. Where I'm sitting, having been a delegate for many years, this is a level of decision eliminating how frequently we have an in-person convention. I hear that we had more responses to the survey, but I want to note that each delegate here today represents an entire meeting. I think the delegates should have been consulted on this.

Delegate: I think the survey was used to make a decision before the delegates could weigh in. In-person conventions have been a 30-year tradition. We do have to look at what has happened historically in our fellowship. I don't feel this was brought up at the quarterly update meetings. I think before we jump to having no in-person convention, we have a proposal about this.

Delegate: It feels as though the board has gone around the delegates. It may make financial sense but bring it here to us at the Delegate Meeting. The Delegates come prepared. They get information and bring it back to their meetings to discuss. What we've seen here today with friendly amendments, is that brainstorming happens here. So please let the delegates have the

information, and let them brainstorm. I appreciate a virtual convention in a pinch, but nothing beats being able to give an actual hug to someone.

Delegate: When decisions are being made that affect the fellowship as a whole, it needs to be brought to the delegates. This is another decision that was made without delegate input.

Delegate: I'm disappointed that it was decided we were not going to have a physical office. I'm also disappointed to find that many years ago, we were promised we would have a final preview of our COSA big book before it got published, but then at the Delegate Meeting, it was a "take it or leave it" attitude, and we were forced to vote. I was looking forward to the in-person convention because it's like a family reunion.

Delegate: When I filled out the survey, I didn't know I was filling it out to make a vote on how we would be doing conventions. I thought it was a "What's your preference?"

Delegate: I appreciate the survey, and want to comment that, as a delegate, we vote on the budget moving forward. Recognizing our financial constraints needs to be a factor in some of these decisions.

Delegate: I feel that the board is in a place between a rock and a hard place. Financially, they have to be fiscally solvent to us as delegates. I've also been on the Convention Committee, and I know that in order to get a halfway decent price, you have to make plans a year in advance. We can ask the delegates that this be considered and put to a vote, but we also need to recognize that the board is doing their best to be fiscally responsible as well as listen to the voices of everyone, not just the delegates.

TechCom Liaison and Delegate: I'd also like to point out, this is a volunteer organization. No one has stepped up to say, yes, I'll be chair of an in-person convention. We don't know if we are going to have it in person, because we don't have people stepping up to be of service. Things have changed since the pandemic. We've moved from an in-person Delegate Meeting to having it entirely on Zoom. We are dealing with changes that a lot of us are not quite prepared for. Instead of pointing the finger of what's wrong, let's acknowledge that there are some challenges we're experiencing, and that it's in these meetings where we can brainstorm and come up with something that's a possible workable solution. There is a delegate who has offered to represent COSA at the SAA convention. She's trying to form a committee for that.

Delegate: One of the meetings I attend (approximately 20 people), does not have a delegate, so I think there is merit to having the survey. Those people wouldn't have had their voices heard at the Delegate Meeting. The big issue to me seems to be the lack of communication between the board and the delegates about what the survey was for, and the communication to COSAs in general about the intent of the survey.

Delegate: When there was work on the book several years ago, someone said, "This is incorrect in this chapter." I did my best to represent this, and asked fellow delegates to comment. I was told by a board member that delegates should not be allowed to talk to each other before the convention. We had no way to communicate with each other until we started having these extra update meetings. In the last couple of years, I've felt that the board has been taking more and more undue authority over the delegates.

Treasurer: Thanks to all for their shares. One reason why we lost so much money I believe is the high inflation rate after the pandemic. Hotel prices just skyrocketed. It also became more expensive to travel. I do serve on other smaller boards that also used to travel to events, but found that it was eating too much of their budget. I'm a big believer in being able to reach people, and don't mind spending money to do so. Currently, we are experiencing big losses with in-person conventions. If we continue to lose money, or people don't commit to travel to an in-person convention, that would be a big problem. That may change again in a few years if the inflation rate comes down. One thing we might look at is going to smaller places like churches or even two-star hotels. We're just trying to be fiscally responsible.

Delegate: This is my second Delegate Meeting. I understand the complexity of this decision. I hear delegates say they feel they've been circumvented. I also understand the feeling of the

board. Moving forward, it seems like we should have some parameters about surveys, delegates, and making decisions about conventions.

Response from the Chair: Thank you all for your input. I think a lot of the responsibility has to fall on me. I'm the chair, and I wrote that survey. The goal of the survey wasn't to circumvent delegate input. Considering the upside-down triangle, Delegates are second. Members are first, they make the broadest part of the triangle. That's why I went to the members instead of making it a delegate vote. I do hear there is great dissatisfaction with how the information was conveyed. Delegates don't vote about when and where a convention will be. In my opinion, delegates didn't need to vote on whether or not to have an in-person convention. Remember only 30 or so people attended that last convention. I know many people are very passionate about going to the in-person convention. The greatest way to have a voice is to join committees, join the board. In that way, you are privy to the inside workings. Right now, we don't have people to chair those conventions. Wishing for something, wanting for something, and carrying it out are not equal. I do understand that none of that is what you're voicing frustration about right now. If we are going to have a convention this year, we will have to have some people show up quickly who can put that together in a matter of months. If you want a vote, that won't be until May-ish, so finding and putting together an in-person convention starting at this point would be a significant struggle. If enough people gather together with the ability to put on an in-person convention, at a price that won't put us at another \$6,000 to \$9,000 loss, we can entertain that. Otherwise, as of this current year, we won't be having an in-person convention. If people do start coming out of the woodwork to put it together, I'll do what I can to make a delegate proposal for the next delegate meeting whether to have an in-person convention every year or every other year.

Delegate: I know COSA is an international organization. I'm in the UK. I don't know how many COSAs come from the UK to a convention simply because of inflationary cost and travel time. I'm not sure if this is really a question for the board, or for everyone. Is there an attraction strategy that's about international expansion as opposed to US-centric expansion? When I hear about in-person conventions, I feel isolated, because I'm not going to go. Is there a chance that a convention is going to come to the UK, Sweden, Japan, or South Africa to make it a true ISO?

Response from the LitCom Liaison and Delegate: One of the things that we also do with the virtual convention is to post times in international time frames. Also, the reason why the Outreach Committee has worked with the Literature Committee to create the retreat in a bag is so if you can't get to a retreat, you can create one for your area. We've also been posting "The Twelve days of COSA" which is a UK sponsored event.

Response from the Treasurer: Please make sure to sign up for CITK (COSAs In The Know), and the *Balance* so you can see what's available.

Response from the LitCom Chair and Delegate: We just got permission today to post flyers and graphics, so we can put a lovely flyer on the website, in the *Balance*, or in CITK. You can send it to [LitCom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:LitCom@cosa-recovery.org) That can go for any place, not just the UK.

Response from the TechCom Liaison and Delegate: A COSA from the UK, and some other COSAs expressed an interest in coming to the last convention, but were financially strapped. We contacted Outreach, and those folks filled out scholarship and grant applications. The person from the UK came, and brought back materials to help start more UK meetings. All of the retreats just start with asking.

## **REGARDING REACHING NEW PEOPLE:**

Observer: My concern is new people. I feel we're talking a lot about things that aren't as important as figuring out a way to get the program out to new people. We did get flyers into the

hands of therapists in the area, and when we went to face-to-face conferences, it really felt like our program got the stability and support we needed. I would like to see us focus more on new people, the ones that are seeking our help.

Outreach and Vice-Chair: Speaking as the Outreach Chair, you have some great ideas. I'd welcome meeting with you to discuss ways to reach new people. That letter to professionals can be downloaded and sent by anyone. Education is about who we are and what we're able to do.

Delegate: I wonder if there's a trend that people come for a little while, and then may funnel right into Step studies. I want to be able to be there for newcomers at meetings.

Delegate: It always used to be understood that conventions, especially the in-person ones at that time, were a huge outreach tool. We also used to fund a few members of the Outreach Committee to attend professional conferences to person a table, give out COSA literature, and answer any questions they may have about us. There are many ways that we can get word to newcomers; we need to be aware that it's our primary purpose.

Delegate: I'm new to COSA. Before that, I relied on betrayal trauma focused support groups. For a while, I helped moderate a forum that had 40,000 users. I think one of the main differences between those spaces and COSA is accessibility; being text based versus mainly video. Finding ways to be more text-based would help spread the message and make COSA more accessible, especially to younger people.

Delegate: The COSA Zoom Room Newcomers meeting has from one to eight new COSAs attending each week.

LitCom Chair and Delegate: I'd like to harness the collective brain power in this meeting. I attend a hybrid meeting where we have between six and ten people in the room, and up to fifteen people on Zoom. When the meeting is finished, the Zoom folks are just out, where the in-person folks stay for fellowship together. Is there a hybrid meeting out there that knows how to integrate the two groups? I also noticed that the younger folks are leaning toward digital literature, and prefer to get their literature online.

Response: Delegate: Many times, we will meet for coffee after our meeting, then if people couldn't get to the meeting in time, they could come for coffee afterwards.

Response: Delegate: I'm aware of a few meetings where someone will stay after for newcomers.

## **COMMENTS ON DECISION MAKING:**

Delegate: I know long-time COSAs who have often served as delegates, but are no longer serving in this role because back during the pandemic, they felt they were not being asked to make decisions, but only to rubber-stamp them. Being a delegate is a demanding position in many ways. There are quarterly update meetings, material to review, and only one month to meet with our meeting members to get clarity about how they feel on issues. As a delegate, I want to feel that my voice is heard. We need more clarity going forward on what decisions should be brought to the delegates.

Delegate: My comment also relates to the summer in-person conventions. In regards to the summer conventions, they don't always need to be in a hotel, or an urban center. I started to share another option with the board when I was the outgoing Convention Chair, but that comment was refused. I suggested a retreat center in Northern California that would only cost \$345 for room, board, six meals, and the registration itself. The cost would be much less than for a hotel. I felt like I wasn't heard or supported. That's why I stepped back for the convention this year. If we do have "out of the box" suggestions, can we listen and weigh in instead of deciding the data we've received in the past determines our future?

Delegate: I love all of this communication, and want to remind everyone that we have quarterly update meetings. These discussions can continue. You can meet with Committee Chairs and provide all of this feedback throughout the year.

Delegate: This situation didn't start with the convention issue. The book was being prepared many years ago. There was much effort. At one point the book chairs had a medical crisis, and then it was turned over to the Literature Committee. Towards the end, it felt like the Literature Committee was exhausted, but thought that they needed to push this forward to get the book published. We as delegates needed to vote on it "right now". We will have a workbook coming, and it could very well be the same thing where you have chapters, and a short time to review them.

Chair: Regarding what things go to delegates, vs. what is done via Board decision, is anyone interested in creating an ad hoc group to address this? There are no specific guidelines.

Response: Four Delegates said they would be willing to be on this committee.

DL and Delegate: I hear frustration, and some feeling that "It's us against them", but I don't feel that way at all. I see a lot of people working really hard, and so many volunteering their time. I'd like to get back to the "WE" of COSA. We need more people. The board is at its minimum. In the current position I have as Delegate Liaison, I sent out twice as many emails as the number of responses I received. In the meetings I attend regularly, we have lots of new people attending, but the same people doing service all the time. Maybe you'll feel energized to go back to your meetings, and say, "Here's where help is needed", and then people will say, "Oh, I can help".

**POST DELEGATE SURVEY:** This will also be emailed to delegates.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfx\\_BgXnJTK7yp4bYRN75Zj2ZzpGdSYIbRDaHwpg-Tow8jQlg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfx_BgXnJTK7yp4bYRN75Zj2ZzpGdSYIbRDaHwpg-Tow8jQlg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0)

**Board Service/CONTACT US:** <https://cosa-recovery.org/resources/contact-us/>

**SERENITY PRAYER AND CLOSING**