

District 17
North Florida Area Conference, Alcoholics Anonymous
Ocala & Marion County, Florida

District 17 Structures & Guidelines

Amended and Ratified November 30, 2023

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Section 1 INTRODUCTION

Who we are.

The District 17 Committee—usually referred to simply as District 17— is part of the service structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. Also known as the General Service Organization, AA’s service structure exists primarily to facilitate Twelfth Step work across the country and around the world.

District 17 is one of approximately 30 geographic districts established by the North Florida Area Conference (Area 14), a geographic region designated by the General Services Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. Each of NFAC’s district committees is composed of several groups. It’s important to note that the collective conscience of all AA groups worldwide is the final authority over what AA will and will not do.

On the North Florida Area Conference (Area 14) map, District 17 encompasses all of Marion County, Florida, and currently includes approximately 70 groups. (The first recorded meeting of AA in Marion County dates back to 1947.) A map of the Area 14 districts can be found on the area website: www.aanorthflorida.org

What we do.

The District 17 Committee serves as a direct link between its groups and other parts of the AA service structure. It also exists to help groups carry the AA message through service to alcoholics inside and outside of the AA fellowship as well as to the general public.

In all our proceedings, District 17 observes the spirit of AA’s Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, and the Six Warranties as expressed in the most current edition of the *AA Service Manual*. We rely on the *AA Service Manual* to guide the conduct of all District 17 activities, unless expressly amended in this document.

Why we have Structures & Guidelines.

The *Structures & Guidelines* document serves as the basic reference for the operation of the district and offers guidance for its trusted servants—GSRs, district officers, and district service committees and their chairpersons. This document articulates the policies and procedures that apply to District 17 and how it conducts its affairs. It does not replace the *AA Service Manual*, but rather supplements it with information that relates specifically to District 17.

The *Structures & Guidelines* document has evolved from the collective experience of District 17’s trusted servants over the years. The policies and procedures expressed here should always guide our actions. As such, they may only be modified, waived, or dispensed with by a two-thirds majority vote of the members as described in [Section 6, Changes to Structures & Guidelines.](#)”

Section 2

DISTRICT 17 STRUCTURE

District 17 Committee Members

The voting members of the District Committee include:

- General Service Representatives (GSRs), elected by the groups in District 17
- District Officers
 - District Committee Member (DCM)
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Registrar
- Standing Committee Chairpersons
 - Accessibilities
 - Archives
 - Bridging the Gap
 - Central Office Liaison
 - Communications with the Professional Community/Public Information (CPC/PI)
 - Corrections, Men
 - Corrections, Women
 - Grapevine
 - Literature
 - Treatment
 - Website
 - Workshop

Additional nonvoting members include:

- Alternates for DCM, GSRs, committee chairs*
- Ad hoc committee chairs
- Webmaster (if different from Website Committee chair)
- Volunteer members of standing service committees and ad hoc committees

*Alternates for voting members may vote in the absence of the respective voting member.

Elections and Appointments

Terms of Office

The term of office for all trusted servants is two years, coinciding with Area 14 officer elections. In this document, the word “panel” is sometimes used to refer to the two-year term that officers and committee chairs serve at the district and area level. (See AA Service Manual for a more complete discussion of panels.)

District Officers

- All district officers (DCM, Alternate DCM, Secretary, Treasurer, and Registrar) are elected by the GSRs.
- All officers are voting members, with the exception of the Alternate DCM, who may vote only in the absence of the DCM.

Committee Chairpersons

Standing Committees

- Standing committee chairpersons are appointed by the incoming DCM for that panel.
- Persons desiring to chair standing committees should present their name to the incoming DCM. All standing committee chairpersons are voting members.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The DCM may establish temporary *ad hoc* committees as required to assist the district in the performance of its mission. Examples include the annual gratitude dinner and the *Structures & Guidelines* review and ratification committee.
- The DCM appoints the chairperson and establishes the duties, goals, and objectives at the time an ad hoc committee is established. Ad hoc committee members are volunteers appointed by the committee chairperson with the approval of the DCM.
- Ad hoc committee chairpersons are nonvoting members of the district committee, unless they hold another position that gives them voting rights.
- Ad hoc committees are automatically dissolved upon completion of their prescribed assignment.

Election & Appointment Procedures

- Elected positions for District 17 include the DCM, Alternate DCM, Registrar, Treasurer, and Secretary
- Elections shall take place at the November District 17 meeting of even years to coincide with Area 14 elections of new panel members.
- Uncontested elections may be decided by a show of hands.
- Contested elections will be by written ballot, using the Third Legacy Procedure (See *AA Service Manual*).
- All other positions are appointed by the incoming DCM for the next panel.

Vacated Position/Uncompleted Term

- The district shall conduct an election for the uncompleted term of any elected office vacated.
- If the vacancy occurs within the last four months of the current panel's term, the district may choose to wait until the next regular election.

Removal Procedure

- The district may remove any officer or committee chairperson from office. Removal shall be by written ballot. A two-thirds majority of voting members is required.

- In the event the DCM, any officer, or committee chairperson should be absent from two consecutive district meetings, without adequate cause for such absence, they may be asked to resign.
- A loss or break in sobriety shall automatically terminate an officer's or committee chairperson's membership in the district committee and eligibility to vote.

SECTION 3

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTED SERVANTS

General Service Representative (GSR)

Qualifications

- Reasonable period of sobriety, two or more years suggested but not required, depending on the home group's group conscience
- Time, willingness, and ability to serve the home group and district for a two-year term

Duties & Responsibilities

- Serves as the home group's primary contact with District 17, Area 14, and GSO
- Updates the DCM about the group and brings group information, issues, and agenda items to the district
- Communicates to the group timely information about District 17, Area 14, and GSO, including news, activities, agenda items, and other issues of interest
- Becomes knowledgeable about the AA Service Manual and the general service structure
- Should become familiar with group history and traditions
- Encourages the home groups to support GSO, Area 14, District 17, and the District 17 Intergroup financially (See AA pamphlet Self Support: Where Money & Spirituality Mix (F3))
- Attends and participates actively in all District 17 meetings
- Willing to attend Area 14 Quarterly Assemblies as a voting member representing the home group. The Alternate GSR may attend as a voting member in place of the GSR.
- Encourages group members to participate in service and events sponsored by District 17 and Central Office (Intergroup).

District Committee Member (DCM)

Qualifications

- Usually has served as a GSR
- Sufficient sobriety (generally four or five years) to be eligible for election as the area delegate
- The time, willingness, and ability to serve the district for a two-year term
- Holds no other service position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities

- Facilitates two-way communication between District 17 groups and the North Florida Area Conference and other areas of the AA General Service structure
- Is familiar with the AA Service Manual, AA Traditions and Concepts, and other AA published material relevant to the position
- Attends and chairs all District 17 monthly meetings
- Creates the agenda for each district meeting and coordinates with the secretary to distribute to members prior to the meeting
- Prepares and presents a written report of items of interest at the monthly district meeting

- Appoints chairpersons of standing committees
- Maintains frequent contact and open communication with District 17 officers, committee chairs, and GSRs
- Ensures coordination of activities among all service positions to ensure that each has adequate resources to meet its needs
- Promotes unity among groups
- Attends all North Florida Area Conference quarterly assemblies as a voting member
- Keeps GSRs informed about NFAC activities; including opportunities to hear the delegate's pre- and post-General Service Conference report, making the conference report materials available to District 17 members
- Maintains open lines of communications with other Area 14 DCMs to coordinate activities and take advantage of shared service opportunities

Alternate DCM

Qualifications

- Meets all qualifications of the DCM
- Holds no other permanent service position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities

- Serves as a backup for the DCM and is prepared to assume the responsibilities of the office if the DCM resigns or is unable to serve for any reason
- Assists, participates, and shares as appropriate in the DCM's responsibilities at district and area meetings
- Understands AA's rules of parliamentary procedures (Robert's Rules of Order) and acts as parliamentarian for district meetings ([See Appendix A](#))
- Oversees and reports on the Annual District 17 Financial Review with assistance from at least two GSRs ([See Section 4: Finance](#))
- Maintains regular outreach to groups, to encourage participation, including electing a GSR
- Orients new GSRs to the AA Service Manual, District 17 Structures & Guidelines, and other relevant AA service material
- Promotes unity among groups

Secretary

Qualifications

- Reasonable period of sobriety, usually two years, and the time, willingness, and ability to serve the district for a two-year term
- Previous service at the district level either as GSR or committee chair strongly recommended
- Good written communication skills, including proper spelling and grammar
- Computer literate and able to communicate via electronic media or willingness to learn

- Access to computer equipment and electronic tools required to accomplish the position's tasks
- Holds no other permanent service position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities

- Attends all district meetings and records in writing the proceedings, including all motions and other decisions made by the voting members
- Prepares and distributes by email minutes of the District 17 monthly meetings within approximately two (2) weeks following each meeting
- In collaboration with DCM, helps prepare an agenda for each monthly meeting
- Distributes agenda, current treasurer's report, minutes from previous month's meeting, and other relevant information to voting members, alternates, and other identified non-voting members at least three days prior to each monthly meeting
- Distributes by email other information or bulletins as may be requested by the DCM
- Maintains and updates District 17 Structures & Guidelines as approved by district voting members
- Chairs the ad hoc committee to review and ratify Structures & Guidelines every four years as required by Structures & Guidelines
- Provides copies of district meeting minutes and other official district correspondence to the District 17 archivist and webmaster in a timely manner
- Maintains the attendance sheet at the district meetings and coordinates with the registrar to update information
- Promotes unity among groups

Treasurer

Qualifications

- Reasonable period of sobriety, ideally five or more years, and the time, willingness, and ability to serve the district for a two-year term
- Good organization and communications skills
- Computer skills adequate to fulfill the position's responsibilities or the willingness to learn
- Working knowledge of QuickBooks or other bookkeeping software that the district chooses to use, or willingness to learn
- Holds no other permanent service position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities

- Keeps all financial records for District 17
- Reports on the financial health of District 17 at monthly meetings, including documentation showing the most current financial status
- Reports monthly on performance against current year's budget to keep members apprised of current income and expenses

- Provides the monthly financial report documents to the Secretary in electronic format far enough in advance to allow for distribution at least three days prior to each monthly meeting
- Collects contributions and other District 17 income, makes bank deposits, and pays bills approved by the district in a timely manner
- Makes all financial records available to the Alternate DCM for the Annual District 17 Financial Review in January of each year; participates as requested in the Financial Review under the leadership of the Alternate DCM
- Maintains District 17 bank accounts in sound condition, reconciles the monthly bank statements, and reports any irregularities immediately to the DCM
- Turns over all district financial records to the incoming DCM and Treasurer at the conclusion of the term of office with copies to the district archivist
- In collaboration with the District 17 DCM, prepares a one (1) year budget for the following year to be presented to the October district meeting for approval at the November district meeting
- Serves as treasurer for the annual gratitude dinner
- Maintains the district's US Post Office box in good standing and checks it regularly for contributions
- Is familiar with the AA Service Manual and the information provided in the AA pamphlet, Self-Support. Where Money & Spirituality Mix (F3)
- Promotes unity among groups

Registrar

Qualifications

- Reasonable period of sobriety, ideally two or more years, and the time, willingness, and ability to serve the district for a two-year term
- Good organizational and communications skills
- Computer skills required to fulfill the position's duties or willingness to learn
- Holds no other permanent service position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities

- Maintains the current roster, including names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of district GSRs and alternates, standing committee chairs, and alternates, DCM and alternate, and other officers and service position appointees
- Secures and makes available the District 17 roster in electronic and print formats for district use as appropriate
- Completes and submits accurate New Group, Group Change, and District Change Forms to the Area 14 Registrar and GSO as appropriate
- Provides the district secretary with the current, complete roster and sign-in sheet for the meeting in advance of each monthly district meeting
- Commits to protect the anonymity of district committee members and the confidentiality of their personally identifiable information in line with District 17 Structures & Guidelines

- Promotes unity among groups.

Standing Service Committee Chairpersons

Standing Service Committees represent a vital activity of District 17. As outlined in our Ninth Tradition, these committees function in the spirit of service to bring sobriety within reach of all who want it.

- All Standing Service Committee chairpersons are appointed by DCM.
- Service committee membership should include the chairperson, alternate chairperson, and as many sober members of AA as needed to get the work done.
- Committees will organize, set goals, and carry out duties according to their own processes.
- Committees are directly responsible and accountable for the service work with which they have been entrusted. Any actions or major decisions affecting District 17 or AA as a whole will require district approval.
- Committees shall consistently strive as best they can to:
 - Carry the AA message effectively
 - Encourage local individual AA members and groups to participate in their activities
 - Collaborate or coordinate activities with other districts and Intergroup representatives to maximize impact and efficiency, avoiding duplication of effort
 - Align their mission and activities with corresponding service activities or initiatives conducted by Area 14 and GSO
 - Follow up on any service commitments or projects initiated by the previous committee
- District 17 committees may work together on common goals and projects as they see fit.

Suggested Qualifications for All Standing Committee Chairpersons

The following are not requirements. They do, however, convey the care with which these positions should be filled, whenever possible and practical.

- Two years of continuous sobriety (suggested not required)
- Time, willingness, and ability to serve District 17 for a two-year term
- Knowledge of the *AA Service Manual* and its application to service in Alcoholics Anonymous
- Ability to organize and work well with others
- Holds no other officer position at the district level

Duties and Responsibilities of all Standing Committee Chairpersons

- Commit to serve a two-year term
- Attend all District 17 monthly meetings and report on committee activities, limiting oral reports to three minutes

- Submit a written copy of their committee's monthly report to the Secretary before or at the meeting for inclusion in the meeting minutes
- Use and account for the committee budget wisely over the budget year
- Request expenditures above allocated budget in advance by placing the request on the district meeting agenda for approval by the voting members
- Submit receipts or reasonable documentation of expenses to the Treasurer for reimbursement
- In collaboration with the Workshop Committee, consider cosponsoring or participating in workshops during each panel rotation
- Compile a "legacy package" to acquaint subsequent chairs with the committee's work and help ensure a smooth transition
- Recommended attendance at the Saturday sessions of the Area 14 quarterly assembly to acquire knowledge and insight needed to serve District 17 well (Note: District 17 funds committee chairs travel expenses to the Assembly. [See Section 4: Finance for details.](#))
- Promote unity among service committees

Accessibilities Committee

The Accessibilities Committee explores, develops, and offers resources to alcoholics with significant barriers to receiving the Alcoholics Anonymous message and to participating in our program of recovery. We want AA to be available to all alcoholics who reach out for it.

Committee members focus on:

- Projects that support members with a variety of accessibility challenges
- Communications that keep the public and appropriate agencies informed about AA accessibility
- Providing resources and guidance to groups so that they can accommodate all AA members

Archives Committee

The Archives Committee works to collect, preserve, and share the oral, written, audiovisual, and digital material concerning the history of Alcoholics Anonymous and its members, notably in District 17 of the NFAC. Material also includes artifacts of historical interest and administrative files and records.

The Committee:

- Encourage groups to complete Group History forms to capture local AA history
- Determines a records retention policy for archived material
- Conduct and record verbal interviews of members who have perspectives on District 17 history that should be archived
- Ensure archival materials are accessible to members, for example through the district website or a standing display at Central Office
- Protect the anonymity of individuals whose names may appear in archived materials

Bridging the Gap Committee

Bridging the Gap committee connects people leaving a treatment or corrections environment with either local district volunteers or the Central Office to which they're released.

Committee members:

- Help discharged individuals to locate and attend one or more AA meetings
- Coordinate activities with the Treatment and Corrections Committees chairpersons to accomplish Bridging the Gap goals

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Public Information (CPC/PI) Committee

In its CPC role, the committee seeks to inform professionals and future professionals in health care, law enforcement, education, and other professional disciplines about AA. In its PI role, the committee conveys AA information to the general public.

The committee focuses on:

- Establishing communication lines with professionals working with alcoholics and seeking simple, effective ways of cooperating without affiliating
- Communicating clearly to all its audiences what AA does and doesn't do through electronic and printed media
- Making presentations about AA to professional and civic audiences
- Ensuring local communications media have accurate information about AA through, for example, PSAs, anonymity-protected interviews, and press kits
- Finding effective ways to direct members of the public who seek information about alcoholism to AA resources

Corrections Committee

The Corrections Committee coordinates the work of individual AA members and groups to carry the message of recovery to alcoholics who are incarcerated. District 17 has two subcommittees, each with its own co-chairs, one to coordinate service to women's facilities and one to coordinate service to men's facilities.

The two subcommittees focus on:

- Bringing meetings and literature into facilities
- Raising awareness of the Corrections Correspondence Service among "inside" and "outside" AA members
- Helping individuals in custody transition to a local AA community through prerelease contacts and coordination with Bridging the Gap committee

Grapevine/LaVina Committee

The Grapevine/LaVina Committee works to educate the membership about the AA *Grapevine and LaVina*, AA's meeting in print in English and Spanish.

Committee members:

- Inform the District 17 members how to subscribe
- Help groups who wish to organize regular *Grapevine* meetings

- Support the work of the Treatment and Corrections Committees with *Grapevine/LaVina* resources

Literature Committee

The Literature Committee works to convey the importance of AA literature to recovery. The chairperson should be aware of the full range of General Service Conference AA approved literature and media material, keep district members up to date on new or changed material, and make sure that GSRs, committee chairpersons, and alternates know how to access and acquire such AA resources.

Committee members:

- May conduct AA literature workshops
- Provide displays, supplies of AA catalogs, and order forms
- Consider proposed additions to and changes in AA General Service Conference-approved literature and audiovisual material
- Support the work of other committees (e.g., CPC/PI, Treatment, Corrections) with information about AA literature and resources

Central Office Liaison

Serves as liaison between District 17 and the local Ocala/Marion County Intergroup. Facilitates mutual cooperation and harmony to the benefit of the fellowship.

Treatment Committee

The Treatment Committee works to carry the AA message into treatment settings where there may be suffering alcoholics.

Committee members:

- Establish lines of communication with local alcoholism (also referred to as substance use disorder) treatment facilities
- As requested, carry the message into these facilities through meetings and literature
- Recruit volunteers to help carry the message
- Coordinate activities with the Bridging the Gap Committee

Website Committee

The mission of the Website Committee is to maintain a District 17 website that carries the message of AA to the still sick and suffering alcoholic; keeps members of the fellowship informed about the district, area, and other GSO activities; and supports the efforts of the District 17 service committees. The website will be maintained by a Webmaster appointed by the DCM and under the direction of the Website Committee. [See Appendix B: District 17 Website Guidelines](#) for specific website policies and procedures.

The Website Committee:

- Serves as the steward of the website, maintaining its integrity in accordance with the Traditions of our fellowship
- Ensures that the security of the website will not be compromised.

- Reports to district members regarding proposed enhancements to the website and seek approval of the voting members prior to implementing any significant changes to core functionality or content
- Determines policies and procedures for the administration of the website.

Workshop Committee

The Workshop Committee spearheads organizing periodic workshops in District 17 on topics relevant to our Three Legacies of recovery, unity, and service and on subject matter of interest to the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Committee members:

- Develop, organize, and implement workshops to carry the AA message and/or further understanding, effectiveness, and awareness of AA functions among the membership
- May consider sponsoring a service fair during each panel in collaboration with other service committees

SECTION 4 FINANCE

Contributions

Many groups choose to contribute monthly or quarterly to District 17 to provide the necessary funds to enable the district to fulfill its responsibilities.

- The AA brochure, *Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix* (F-3), describes ways of apportioning group contributions to support various service entities.
- Contributions are not dues or fees. They are voluntary contributions and may be made by check or online.
- Checks should be made payable to District 17 and the group name and AA service number should appear on the check.
- The District 17 website (www.aadistrict17fl.org) should include complete information, including a link for online contributions.

Annual budget

- The District 17 fiscal year begins January 1 and ends December 31.
- Each year, the DCM and the district Treasurer will prepare a proposed annual budget for the coming year and present it at the October meeting to be voted on at the November meeting.
- The Treasurer will maintain separate bank accounts for:
 - Main checking
 - Prudent reserve
 - Pink Can/corrections
 - Gratitude Dinner

Changes to the Budget

- Once the budget is approved by voting members, voting members must approve any further changes.
- Any motion made at a district business meeting to amend an already approved Annual Budget for an amount greater than \$200 will require that the motion be tabled until the next monthly meeting. This waiting period allows the GSRs to take the motion to their groups for discussion and feedback. This delay also allows the Treasurer and DCM to review the financial impact of this change and report to the district.
- The Secretary shall email a proposed budget change motion with the regular distribution of the monthly meeting minutes and the proposed motion shall be included on the agenda.

Prudent Reserve

A prudent reserve shall be maintained.

- The amount of this reserve should be at least the estimated District 17 operating expenses required for three months of operation.
- This amount should be reviewed for its appropriateness at the Annual Financial Review

Expenditures

- Outside of already approved business, no member of the district is authorized to establish liabilities or open accounts in the name of the district without district approval.
- All deposits and payments should be made into and from the appropriate bank accounts.

Pink Can Funds

- Pink Can refers to financial contributions made District 17 for the purchase AA literature to be distributed by the Corrections Committee. Pink Can funds are kept separate from 7th Tradition contributions made to the District.
- The District 17 Treasurer maintains a separate bank account for collecting and disbursing Pink Can funds.
- There is no set budget for Pink Can funds, which are available for the committee chairs to spend as long as there are funds available.
- Pink Can funds are to be used exclusively for purchase of AA General Service Conference-approved literature from the District 17 Intergroup office. Purchases can be made only by the chairpersons of the Men's and Women's Correction Committees or their alternates.
- This literature is for exclusive use in correctional facilities located in Marion County, including state prisons and the county jail.
- It is recommended that both chairs conduct, at a minimum, a semi-annual inventory of AA literature in facilities where libraries are maintained.
- Historical records show that the Men's and Women's Corrections Committees have spent Pink Can funds in amounts closely related to the relative populations of the facilities. As such, there is no need for designating a formal percentage of funds for each committee's use.

Gratitude Dinner Funds

- Gratitude Dinner funds are kept separate from other District 17 funds.
- The Gratitude Dinner bank account is used as a repository for income from ticket sales, raffles, auctions, and other sources of revenue and for disbursing funds to cover expenses associated with the event.
- This interest-bearing account is seeded with an amount deemed appropriate by the voting members from the prudent reserve to cover expenses incurred before ticket sales begin.
- The Gratitude Dinner is not intended as a fundraiser. Any overage between Gratitude Dinner revenue and expenses may be disbursed according to the will of the voting members. In the event of a loss, funds from the main checking account will be used to make up the difference.
- It is suggested that District 17 Treasurer also serve as the Gratitude Dinner Committee treasurer, accounting for ticket sales, collecting funds, and authorizing disbursements.

NFAC Quarterly Assembly Reimbursement

The following expenses are to be funded from the District 17 Area Assembly budget line item. Receipts and/or reasonable proof of expenditure are required.

DCM

The current District 17 DCM is eligible for reimbursement for one night per assembly at the assembly hotel. If additional days of service are required, the DCM is eligible for corresponding additional reimbursement. The district will also reimburse the DCM for up to \$60 per diem for meals.

District Officers and Standing Committee Chairpersons

Individuals currently serving in these positions are eligible for personal automobile expenses (gasoline and tolls) reimbursement up to a \$75 maximum per assembly. Carpooling is encouraged.

GSRs

Groups are encouraged to reimburse their GSRs for expenses incurred for participating in the NFAC quarterly assembly. For GSRs of groups that cannot fund attendance and when the location of the assembly may require an overnight stay, District 17 DCM may reserve and pay for one room to be shared by two male GSRs and one room to be shared by two female GSRs at the assembly hotel with the following conditions:

- Participating GSRs must commit to attending before the reservation deadline.
- They must arrive Saturday morning, attend Saturday workshops, and the Sunday morning business meeting.
- Alternate GSRs are eligible for reimbursement in the event the GSR is unable to attend but must meet all other conditions.
- No other expenses will be reimbursed by the district. GSRs are encouraged to ask their groups for other reimbursement.
- GSRs may petition the district for personal automobile expenses (gasoline and tolls) reimbursement if their group has a hardship.

Treasurer's Reports

- The District 17 Treasurer will present a report of the district's financial position at each monthly district meeting.
- The report is to be an actual full calendar month report and the report approved at the business meeting is the full report of previous month activities.
- A copy of each monthly report will be emailed to District 17 members prior to that month's meeting and included in the monthly minutes.
- As needed, an interim report of current expenses and income, if it differs from the printed report, may be made at the meeting to keep members up to date on financial matters.

Annual Financial Review

- An annual financial review of the previous year's income and expenses will be conducted prior to the February district meeting. The Alternate DCM and two GSRs

appointed by the DCM will conduct the annual financial review and report on it at the February meeting.

- The Treasurer will make available all financial records for the previous year no later than the January meeting.

SECTION 5

DISTRICT BUSINESS MEETING

Schedule

- Officers, GSRs, Committee Chairs and alternates for all positions are expected to attend monthly District 17 meetings.
- All interested members of AA are encouraged to attend District 17 meetings and to participate as non-voting members.
- Any regularly scheduled district meeting that falls on a holiday will be rescheduled at the earliest possible alternate date.
- The Secretary will provide a sign-in sheet for each meeting to document attendance.
- The Secretary will notify the membership in advance of each month's meeting date, time, and location, including any changes from the regular schedule.

Meeting Materials

- Minutes: The Secretary shall email the draft minutes of the prior District 17 meeting for review to all district officers, chairpersons, GSRs, and alternates approximately two weeks after each district meeting.
- Agenda: The DCM sets the monthly meeting agenda. Members who wish to propose agenda items should provide them in writing to the Secretary at least 10 days prior to the meeting if possible.
- The Secretary shall email the agenda, financial reports, and other meeting related documents to all district officers, chairpersons, GSRs, and alternates approximately three days prior to the next district meeting. Members should review all materials prior to the meeting.

Business Meeting Procedure

- Rules of order: All district business meetings will be conducted in general compliance with Robert's Rules of Order as amended by the General Service Conference. The Alternate DCM serves as parliamentarian. ([See Appendix A](#))
- Quorum: A quorum for district business will be those members present.

Voting

- All District 17 officers, GSRs, and standing committee chairpersons have full voting privileges at monthly district meetings and the district elections.
- No person shall have more than one vote per motion regardless of the number of qualifying district service positions the person holds.
- District members must be present at a meeting to vote.
- The DCM shall take a count of eligible voters at each district business meeting and follow the protocol used by the General Service Conference for conducting business.
- A majority vote (51% of the voting members present) will be sufficient for usual district business.
- Opportunity should always be given for the minority opinion to be heard. After each vote, the side that did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their

position. (For more information, see the AA Service Manual, How the Conference Operates.)

- The DCM votes only when a tiebreaker is required.

Meeting Etiquette

- To keep meetings orderly and running on time, no one should speak without first being recognized by the DCM, and if people start speaking out of turn, the DCM will call for order.
- All persons who wish to speak should be given the opportunity before anyone is recognized to speak for a second time.
- Participants are encouraged to keep remarks brief and on topic and to avoid repeating points already made by oneself or others.
- All participants are to be treated with respect. Members may disagree, but should maintain a civil, respectful tone.
- The DCM is empowered to maintain order in the meeting.

Meeting Safety

- District 17 maintains a welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for all meetings.
- See *Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare (SMF-209)* for more information.

Order of Business

The suggested order of business for the district meeting is:

Call to order

Serenity Prayer

Reading of the Concept of the month

Reading of the Tradition of the month

Roll Call and Introduction of new GSRs and visitor

Secretary's Report

Treasurer's Report

DCM Report

Registrar Report

Standing Committee Reports:

- Accessibility
- Archives
- Bridging the Gap
- CPC/PI
- Corrections
- Grapevine/LaVina
- Intergroup/Central Office
- Literature
- Treatment
- Website
- Workshop

Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Old Business
New Business
Announcements
Closing

Virtual Meetings

- To enable the broadest possible attendance at the monthly District 17 meetings, the Secretary and Webmaster and Accessibilities Committee Chairpersons will provide opportunities for those unable to attend in person to participate via a virtual meeting, such as Zoom or MS Meet.
- Information regarding virtual meeting participation will be included in the meeting materials distributed by the Secretary prior to each monthly meeting.

SECTION 6

CHANGES TO STRUCTURES & GUIDELINES

Any motion made at a district business meeting that changes or impacts the *Structures & Guidelines* will require that the motion be tabled until the next monthly meeting as may be appropriate.

- This waiting period allows the GSRs to take the motion to their groups for discussion and feedback.
- The Secretary shall email the proposed amendment(s) with the regular mailing of the minutes. The proposed amendment(s) shall be included on the agenda. A two-thirds vote in favor by the voting members present, and voting shall constitute adoption of the amendment(s).

The entire *Structures & Guidelines* should be reviewed, amended as needed, and ratified by the voting members of the district every four (4) years.

APPENDIX A: Simplified Robert's Rules of Order for Use at AA Business Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order is used around the world to allow organizations to make decisions in a timely and mutually accepted manner. This document presents a simplified version for use in the business meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous or other 12-step programs. This is not General Service Conference-approved AA literature, but it does reflect common practice.

Main Ideas

- We gather in a spirit of cooperation to discover our group conscience. We need never fear the conscience of the group.
- For each discussion, everyone should have the chance to speak once before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times.
- Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- The members discuss only one thing at a time.

The Chairperson

- The Chair performs an invaluable service by running the business meeting according to the rules of order.
- The Chair cannot vote, introduce motions, or participate in discussion.
- In general, no one should speak without first being recognized by the Chair and if people start speaking out of turn, the chair will call for order.

The Secretary

The Secretary takes notes to prepare for the official written record of the meeting, called the "minutes." Clear, accurate minutes are very important – they will be used to keep track of the group's conscience, as well as unfinished business from previous business meetings.

The Secretary need not record everything that is said; the minutes are *not* a transcript. But they should include:

- Officer's reports, if any were made during the meeting.
- The exact wording of any motions introduced and their fate (passed, defeated, referred to committee, or tabled).
- If motions were referred to committee, make sure the group specifies the duties of the committee and when their report should be delivered to the full business meeting.

If at any time the Secretary is unclear about something, he/she should ask for clarification immediately. The Secretary can vote, introduce motions, and participate in discussion.

TYPES OF MOTIONS

Main motion

A **main motion** is the topic under discussion (e.g., "I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting"). After recognition by the chair, any member can introduce a main motion when no other motion is on the table. A main motion requires a second to be considered. A main

motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely) before a new main motion may be considered.

Subsidiary motion

A **subsidiary motion** affects the main motion under discussion (e.g., “I move that we amend the motion to specify that the break should be 5 minutes long”). After recognition by the chair, any member can introduce a subsidiary motion when another motion is on the table. Once a subsidiary motion has been seconded, it must be disposed of before returning to the main motion. Subsidiary motions can theoretically have their own subsidiary motions, each of which must be resolved in turn. The various kinds of subsidiary motions have different precedence and require different votes to pass (see next page).

Technically, once a motion has been introduced and seconded, it “belongs” to the group, not the person who introduced it. Instead of the mover “withdrawing” it, the group should **amend** it or move to **postpone the motion indefinitely** (a way of killing the motion without voting it down).

How to make a motion

To bring a new idea before the group:

- After recognition by the chair, present your motion by starting “I move that we ”. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration.
- If a motion passes, it goes into effect immediately or at a specified time.
- Defeated motions cannot be reintroduced for 6 months.

To change or add to the wording of a motion under discussion:

- After recognition by the chair, move to amend the motion by proposing a specific amendment. Most amendments are friendly, arising naturally out of the group’s discussion of the motion, and can be accepted by the original mover. But if the original mover objects, a majority vote will still amend the original motion.
- An amendment can completely reword or replace a motion without voting it down.

If you have heard enough discussion, either:

- Move to close the discussion. This ends discussion and brings the assembly to a vote on the pending question only. Requires a 2/3 vote.
- Move to limit discussion to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a 2/3 vote.

To recommend more study and/or investigation be given to a motion:

- Move to **refer to a committee**. Refers a question to be investigated by a specified group, with a specified purpose, and a specified time to report back to the entire group.
- This motion requires a majority vote.

To postpone a motion until some later time:

- Move to **table the motion** until a specific time. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it is dead.
- A majority is required to table a motion.

Other considerations

- **You are unsure that the Chair has announced the results of a vote correctly.** Without being recognized, call for a “division of the house.” At this point a standing vote will be taken.
- **If you are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification:** Without recognition, call for a “point of information.” The Chair will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.
- **If you think the rules of order have been violated:** Without recognition, call for a “point of order.” The Chair will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.
- **To kill a just-introduced motion:** Without recognition from the Chair simply state “I object to consideration.” This must be done before any discussion. This motion requires no second, is not debatable and requires a 2/3 vote.
- **If you have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.** Move to reconsider. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the vote had not occurred.
- **You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting:** Move to rescind. A 2/3 vote is required.
- **in adversarial assemblies, nothing is discussed without a motion.** But in AA, cooperation is assumed, and it is often counterproductive to introduce a main motion before there has been some discussion of its subject matter. After some discussion, the intent of the group is usually clearer, and the chair can be of service by attempting to coalesce what he or she has heard into a coherent motion and ask if anyone will introduce the motion.

To end the meeting:

- Move to **close business meeting.** All pending motions will be tabled until next biz meeting. This motion takes immediate precedence and is not discussed.
- This motion requires a majority vote to pass.

APPENDIX B: District 17 Website Guidelines

The following policies and procedures, set by the website committee and approved by the voting members, relate to the structure, continuity, and maintenance of the District 17 website.

- The Website Committee will coordinate hosting of the site and will ensure that fees for hosting services are paid and those services provided.
- The Website Committee will ensure that the appropriate permissions have been obtained when required before publishing materials from other AA entities or sources.
- No personal phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses, last names, chat rooms, or bulletin boards/message boards will be published on the website.
- The website will not include advertising or endorsements.
- Links from the website to known AA entities are permitted.
- Links to information resources and website tools are permitted only to the extent that they directly support a District 17 event or better use of website information.
- All web pages must carry appropriate copyright notices to protect the intellectual property rights of District 17, North Florida Area 14, AA World Services, the AA *Grapevine*, or other legal entities.
- All posted events must be sponsored by a recognized AA entity. In addition, all group or district events must include an AA meeting or carry the spiritual message of recovery through the 12-Steps, 12-Traditions, or 12-Concepts. They must have no outside 12-step fellowships participating.
- Website methodology, content and presentation will be guided by that of the GSO Website (www.aa.org) including that site's "FAQ About A.A. Websites" (<https://www.aa.org/frequently-asked-questions-about-aa-websites>) and "A.A. Guidelines on Internet" (<https://www.aa.org/aa-guidelines-internet>).