

A single point of accountability!

A term that has gained popularity over the years is an out-of-date reference to a traffic cop. That term is Whistleblower. In a spiritual organization such as ours using that terminology might seem heavy handed. I will instead choose to use some terminology from Chapter Ten in our Basic Text. "We are each other's eyes and ears; when we do something wrong our fellow addicts help us to help ourselves by showing us what we cannot see." How is it that we now have a single corporation – Narcotics Anonymous World Services (NAWS) Inc. – instead of the three corporations from the late 90's, yet there is now less accountability? Unaccountability at NAWS Inc. is the norm today; discussing that observation might possibly be the necessary means to help NAWS Inc. and the World Board members (WB's) see a few things they can't.

The best place to start is with the budgets proposed over the last ten years by NAWS Inc. to the World Service Conference (WSC). Every two years the Conference Approval Track (CAT) is released to the WSC participants ninety (90) days in advance of the event. The WB's have an Executive Committee consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Why is the budget not signed by the Treasurer? Why is the budget divide into four categories – Literature Production and Distribution, WSC Support, Fellowship Development, and Events – when we are suppose to be working under a unified budget, now that we only have one corporation? Why has Iran been singled out in every proposed budget since 2006? The first mention of this oddity was in the 2014 CAT and very little was provided to explain the practice. "We include a separate line item for Literature Income (Iran) in both income and cost of goods. We show this separately and call out the budget totals without Iran because, as we have repeatedly[?] reported, these are not funds readily available to us." However, the additional line item called, "Literature Distribution (Iran)", is not mentioned and that amount is \$194,856 in the current CAT, with this special explanation, "This is the allocation for the literature that is sold in Iran." That description from the 2014 CAT makes me wonder; what exactly does the explanation mean? In further review of the 2014 CAT I am puzzled by the reference of the costs for Technology in the amount of \$617,352 and the following explanation. "As already mentioned, the major expense in the upcoming cycle to transition to a new accounting platform and related technology needs will come from reserve funds." If this major expense will come from reserve funds why is there no mention of reserve funds being used in the budget? Additionally, if the money from reserves is being used for those projects, how will NAWS Inc. spend over \$300,000 a year for technology?

On February 19th, 2014 I sent an e-mail to the World Service Office (WSO) asking for a copy of the procedural manual for our primary service center. Additionally, I asked for a copy of the job descriptions. I got this in response. "We've received your email message and want you to know that it's important to us. The appropriate Board members will see the information or question you sent, if it pertains directly to the Board's business. Otherwise, a member of the WSO staff will send any further response to you very soon." I patiently waited until April 7th, 2014 before resubmitting my request for the information. The response I received that afternoon leads me to believe the WSO does not have a procedural manual for the office. "You have our apologies for any challenges that our response time may have created. These are busy times for us and we do our best to offer timely responses, but are not always able to meet the writer's expectations." The following information was attached as well. A copy of the Internal Processes and Procedures for the WB's dated July 2013, NAWS Restated Articles of Inc. from 1998, and the Human Resource Panel (HRP) Internal Guidelines dated 2012-2014, and a hyperlink to A Guide to World Services. None of these documents include a WSO procedural manual. And as for my second question I was told that, "...we do not have a file of up-to-date job descriptions." The Twelve Concepts for NA Service were not adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous, they were written principally by some of the people currently employed by NAWS Inc. The Fifth Concept is this, "For each responsibility assigned to the service structure, a single point of decision and accountability should be clearly defined." Here is a portion of the essay. "In exercising the Fifth Concept, we make a simple, straightforward

contract with our trusted servants. Right from the start, they know what we are asking of them, what decisions they are expected to make themselves, and to what degree we will hold them accountable for the service work they do on our behalf. Exercise of Concept Five is not a task to be taken lightly. It calls for us to carefully consider the service work we want done; to clearly designate who should do that work; to delegate the authority to do it; and to maintain accountability for those duties.” Additionally it states, “This simple principle applies to all the services provided in Narcotics Anonymous, from the group to our world services.” If the easiest way to apply this Concept is right from the start, why does NAWS Inc. not have a procedural manual or job descriptions for ALL of our non professional special workers? Out of all the documents I was sent in response to my inquiry I was only able to find two lines that address how the procedural manual and job descriptions might be established. I found them in the Internal Processes and Procedures for the WB’s (July 2013) under Corporate Responsibilities bullet point two, “Ensures effective organizational planning” and four, “Reaffirms its commitment to managing world services’ resources effectively”. The lack of a procedural manual or job description for the Executive Director(s) previously known as the Office Manager makes me wonder how the WB’s are capable of following through on their Corporate Responsibility called for in bullet point twelve, “Affirms the authority of the Executive Director (ED) and assesses performance through the Executive Committee (EC) that functions as the personnel committee”. The bullet point that should provide the WB’s with the authority to assess performance, but doesn’t, is number eleven, which states “Ensures that a financial audit is performed, presented to the board, and distributed to conference participants”. A financial audit is not the same as a performance audit. Without the ability of anyone to request and complete a performance audit what we currently have at NAWS Inc., is the fox guarding the chicken coup.

On page 15 of the 2004 CAR we find the following statement. “For the past six years [since 1998], we have been engaged in a process designed to determine whether the fellowship wants to revise the Basic Text and, if so, how. Motion 4, which follows the explanation on the next several pages, ends this “plan to plan” (to plan to plan)[?] process and recommends a project that ultimately would create an approval form Sixth Edition Basic Text to be voted on at the 2008 World Service Conference.” Probably the largest component of Motion 4 was that there would be, “no changes made to Chapters One through Ten” of the 5th Edition of our Basic Text. However, every page was changed when the 6th Edition was produced. The 5th Edition Chapters One through Ten are printed on pages 3 to 103, in the 6th Edition Chapters One through Ten are printed on pages 3 to 107. Not a single page in the 1st 10 Chapters of the 6th Edition matches with the pages in the 5th Edition. Every single page that was not going to get changed was changed! For instance, the line in Step 6, “there is a certain distorted security in familiar pain” was on page 33, now it’s on page 34. Who made the decision to circumvent this essential part of the process by changing every single page of the 1st Ten Chapters of our Basic Text? How can a process that had been established and articulated for over 10 years get completely disregarded like this?

The 5 year period, 2002 and 2007, saw the NAWS Inc. Executive Director (ED) compensation as reported on IRS form 990 go from \$117,861 to \$218,677. Over the same time period the assistant ED went from \$93,913 to \$143,497. Sometime between July 2007 and June 2008 the NAWS Inc. annual report shows that a former WB member - 1998 to 2006 - and Chairman of the WB’s had turned into an employee at NAWS Inc. How can a member of the WB’s, especially one that was the Chairman of the WB’s go from being on the Corporate Board overseeing NAWS Inc. and it’s special workers, to become a special worker? Particularly when the NAWS Inc. ED – Office Manager – received over \$100,000 annual pay raise and the assistant ED – Assistant Office Manager – received a \$50,000 annual pay raise while this person was serving as a WB’s? If nothing else this reeks of impropriety, others might call it pay back. Regardless of the special insight or expertise this person might have possessed even the appearance of impropriety should have been avoided at all costs. Perhaps this should be something that needs to be included in the future NAWS Inc. procedural manual; no former WB’s will be considered for a work group or a compensated position at NAWS Inc. for a period of 10 years. The appearance of impropriety with regard to NAWS Inc. employment began well before this example. For instance, in 1996, the current assistant ED resigned early from her Board of Trustees position and became a paid employee.

At WSC 2006 a motion was presented by the WB's, "To remove the Convention Guidelines from the World Services inventory." The motion passed but to this day we have nothing to take their place. The World Convention Guidelines take up about a page and a half of the current *Guide to World Services*. There are no instructions about handling cash, inventory procedures, accounting practices, program criteria, new-comer packets, speaker selection, merchandise procedures etc... How can we be certain that safeguards are being followed when we have no safeguards in place? The first World Convention held after removing the Convention Guidelines in 2007 lost \$596,000 and the next one in 2009 lost \$212,895. Where is our single point of accountability when it comes to loosing over \$900,000 in back to back World Conventions? What was the rush to remove our Convention Guidelines? Was it really orchestrated so special interest meetings and dances could be held at World Conventions? Why have there been no Convention Guidelines proposed to replace the ones that served us for so long?

In the 2000 CAR a major change happened within our Service Structure. It can be found under Motion 12 proposed by the World Board. Under the proposed new section in *A Temporary Working Guide to Our World Service Structure* titled The World Service Conference there was a subheading titled The Meeting of the World Service Conference. In the 2nd full paragraph on page 30 is a portion of a sentence, "approves service material that was not contained in the CAR". Earlier in the same CAR was Motion 5 proposed by the World Board. Its intention was to modify/divide the way we label Fellowship approved literature. It appears to only address Service material in the body of the Motion but it included, "A. Fellowship - approved literature" that specified, "This type of service material will be distributed to conference participants in the *Conference Agenda Report*, to be considered at the World Service Conference meeting during an old business session." It also included, "B. Conference-approved materials" that specified, "This type of material will be sent to conference participants at least ninety days prior to the World Service Conference meeting, to be considered during a new business session." These 2 Motions proposed by the WB's are what brought us the Service System (SS) project.

In the 2008 CAT NAWS Inc. proposed a budget in which \$150,000 was recognized as a priority spending measure to "revitalize our Service Structure" the SS project. The plan was simple, "This project will be handled by a workgroup that will use focus groups or individuals for specific areas of service. We expect that some of the material developed in the 2008 - 2010 conference cycle might be ready for conference approval by WSC 2010, but the majority of the work will be to provide framed options and recommendations for discussion by the conference and the fellowship. We expect that this will be a two conference-cycle project." In the 2010 CAR the WB's showed us what they had accomplished with the \$150,000. A Motion from the WB's was submitted to change the Vision Statement that was approved in 1996, even though they said they did not have to show us. Here is what was accomplished.

First, we have tweaked the language in general so that it is more clearly a vision statement for all NA services, not just for world services. Then we added a second bullet that speaks to the joy and spiritual growth that come from service. We felt that adding the new bullet in the second spot makes for a logical and elegant progression from a bullet focused on addicts, to one on members, to one on NA communities, and finally to one on the world at large.

The next change, to the third bullet, was perhaps the most difficult for us. There was much discussion about how to phrase the idea of systemic or lateral cooperation throughout NA service, not just between world services and NA communities. After several revisions, we think we captured the idea of interconnectivity that we were trying to emphasize.

The final changes are to the closing paragraph. Again, these changes resulted after much discussion. Our goal was to shorten the length of this paragraph but retain the references to honesty, trust, goodwill, and a loving Higher Power.

This effort to “revitalize our Service Structure” sure seems to be missing the mark. If anything has come about as a result of the SS project it’s more not less apathy, as it’s been labeled by the WB’s. The label I would apply to NA member’s behavior is this, they are simply disgusted, and that creates disinterest not apathy. Why can’t I see the minutes from this workgroup and the focus groups that came up with these proposed changes? Why are the WB’s minutes not posted on NA.org or available through an e-blast similar to those used for other publications? Why would we be told we are telling you about this in the CAR, but we really don’t have to? If there is a single point of accountability for spending \$150,000 to tweak, rename, rephrase, shorten, and add a few bullet points, who would it be? The WB’s said, “We expect that this will be a two conference-cycle project”, back in 2008. We are now into the fourth conference-cycle, and nobody including NAWS Inc. (I asked) can tell us how much money – estimates are in the Million dollar range – has been spent on a project that was not asked for by the Fellowship. Where can we look for that single “million dollar” point of accountability? At WSC 2014 there were approved additions to our *Guide to Local Service*, allowing for optional approaches within our Service Structure. Why have they not been inserted into the guide and published? Now that the modifications from the SS project have been approved as an option, why has the Conference recognized another \$70,000 for the SS project?

The Business Plan workgroup has been a staple on every proposed NAWS Inc. budget since before the term workgroup was established. How can I determine who the past members have been, and who the current members of this workgroup are? According to the 2014 CAT this workgroup, “as required by law, a portion of this group fulfills the audit committee function.” I’d like to know more about that law and who decides which portion of the members take part in the audit.

I know that by now your brain is sore, but I’d like to offer a few more random questions. Who decides the travel plans for the special workers at NAWS Inc.? Why do special workers need to attend European Delegate meetings? How is it that our special workers are hiring consultants to tell them how to manage NAWS Inc. and the Regional Delegates? We could save money if we simply hired the consultants to do the special worker job in the first place. Who will decide how to spend the \$764,682 in Developmental Literature that is currently proposed in the 2014 CAT? Is that amount based on cost of literature or is that number based on the normal retail price? Who will decide how to spend the \$569,034 on Fellowship Support that is also proposed in the 2014 CAT? Or how about the \$417,867 in Developmental Subsidies & Allowances, where is the single point of accountability regarding that money? In reviewing the proposed budgets over the last 10 years we have spent over \$15.7 Million on rent and utilities at our service centers around the world. Is this a wise use of our money? When will we ever begin to see the other side of the budget? The requesting of money is one thing, explaining exactly how that money was spent is another. The NAWS Inc. annual reports reveal even less about the expenditures than they reveal in the requests. How is this being directly responsible, and where is the single point of accountability?

Unaccountability will continue to be the norm if WE allow it to be. What is the level of your disgust? Are you ready to stand up and say you’re not going to take it anymore? If so begin bringing these and other issues up at your Home Group because that is Narcotics Anonymous, NAWS is a corporation that we created to serve the Group, not the other way around.

Questions for the World Board and NAWS Inc.

1. The WB's have an Executive Committee consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Why is the budget not signed by the Treasurer?
2. Why is the budget divide into four categories – Literature Production and Distribution, WSC Support, Fellowship Development, and Events – when we are suppose to be working under a unified budget, now that we only have one corporation?
3. Why has Iran been singled out in every proposed budget since 2006?
4. In further review of the 2014 CAT I am puzzled by the reference of the costs for Technology in the amount of \$617,352 and the following explanation. "As already mentioned, the major expense in the upcoming cycle to transition to a new accounting platform and related technology needs will come from reserve funds." If this major expense will come from reserve funds why is there no mention of reserve funds being used in the budget?
5. Additionally, if the money from reserves is being used for those projects, how will NAWS Inc. spend over \$300,000 a year for technology?
6. If the easiest way to apply this Concept is right from the start, why does NAWS Inc. not have a procedural manual or job descriptions for ALL of our non professional special workers?
7. Who made the decision to circumvent this essential part of the process by changing every single page of the 1st Ten Chapters of our Basic Text?
8. How can a member of the WB's, especially one that was the Chairman of the WB's go from being on the Corporate Board overseeing NAWS Inc. and it's special workers, to become a special worker? Particularly when the NAWS Inc. ED – Office Manager – received over \$100,000 annual pay raise and the assistant ED – Assistant Office Manager – received a \$50,000 annual pay raise while this person was serving as a WB's?
9. The World Convention Guidelines take up about a page and a half of the current *Guide to World Services*. There are no instructions about handling cash, inventory procedures, accounting practices, program criteria, new-comer packets, speaker selection, merchandise procedures etc... How can we be certain that safeguards are being followed when we have no safeguards in place?
10. Where is our single point of accountability when it comes to loosing over \$900,000 in back to back World Conventions? What was the rush to remove our Convention Guidelines? Was it really orchestrated so special interest meetings and dances could be held at World Conventions? Why have there been no Convention Guidelines proposed to replace the ones that served us for so long?

11. In the 2010 CAR the WB's showed us what they had accomplished with the \$150,000 for the SS project. A Motion from the WB's was submitted to change the Vision Statement that had been approved in 1996. Why can't I see the minutes from this workgroup and the focus groups that came up with these proposed changes? If there is a single point of accountability for spending \$150,000 to tweak, rename, rephrase, shorten, and add a few bullet points, who would it be? We are now into the fourth conference-cycle, and nobody including NAWS Inc. (I asked) can tell us how much money – estimates are in the Million dollar range – has been spent on a project that was not asked for by the Fellowship. Where can we look for that single "million dollar" point of accountability? At WSC 2014 there were approved additions to our *Guide to Local Service*, allowing for optional approaches within our Service Structure. Why have they not been inserted into the guide and published? Now that the modifications from the SS project have been approved as an option, why has the Conference recognized another \$70,000 for the SS project?
12. Why are the WB's minutes not posted on NA.org or available through an e-blast similar to those used for other publications?
13. The Business Plan workgroup has been a staple on every proposed NAWS Inc. budget since before the term workgroup was established. How can I determine who the past members have been, and who the current members of this workgroup are?
14. Who decides the travel plans for the special workers at NAWS Inc.?
15. Why do special workers need to attend European Delegate meetings?
16. How is it that our special workers are hiring consultants to tell them how to manage NAWS Inc. and the Regional Delegates? We could save money if we simply hired the consultants to do the special worker job in the first place.
17. Who will decide how to spend the \$764,682 in Developmental Literature that is currently proposed in the 2014 CAT? Is that amount based on cost of literature or is that number based on the normal retail price?
18. Who will decide how to spend the \$569,034 on Fellowship Support that is also proposed in the 2014 CAT?
19. Or how about the \$417,867 in Developmental Subsidies & Allowances, where is the single point of accountability regarding that money?
20. In reviewing the proposed budgets over the last 10 years we have spent over \$15.7 Million on rent and utilities at our service centers around the world. Is this a wise use of our money?
21. When will we ever begin to see the other side of the budget? The requesting of money is one thing, explaining exactly how that money was spent is another. How is this being directly responsible, and where is the single point of accountability?