

## Transcription of 9/20/2022 Town Hall About Electronic and Hybrid Groups

### Part 1: Introductions and Presentation

Stephen introduced the panel: Joanne, Delegate and Presenter; Meredith, Group Records Coordinator and Presenter, and himself, Alternate Delegate and Moderator of the event. 74 members were in attendance.

Stephen briefly explained the agenda for the Town Hall.

Polls were taken:

Poll 1: Are you attending a Physical Meeting with an Electronic Component (Hybrid)?

Yes - 28 (51%) / No - 27 (49%)

Poll 2: Are you attending a Permanent Electronic Meeting in the GEA?

Yes - 19 (33%) / No – 38 (66%)

Poll 3: Are you attending an In-Person Meeting?

Yes – 32 (50%) / No – 32 (50)%

Poll 4: Are you attending an Oregon Area Temporary Zoom Meeting?

Yes – 46 (72%) / No- 18 (28%)

Meredith and Joanne spoke about the definitions of Types of Groups: Temporary Electronic, Electronic, Physical and Hybrid (now called Physical with an Electronic Component).

Joanne cleared up a rumor. WSO is not going to discontinue (Hybrid Meetings) now referred to as Physical Meetings with an Electronic Component.

### TYPES OF GROUPS – Presented by Meredith and Joanne

#### PHYSICAL

- What we are familiar with, face-to-face, you have a choice of listing your meeting on two websites. You list your group with the Group Records Coordinator. It is up to you to notify AIS of your meeting changes.

#### TEMPORARY ELECTRONIC

- These groups started during the pandemic when groups could not meet in person
- List with the Area Group Records Coordinator
- Leave as is for now
- Undetermined how long it will last before WSO makes you choose your type of meeting
- Use the current physical WSO ID#
- Use group email address for people to request link to meeting

#### ELECTRONIC

- Will or have joined the Global Electronic Area (GEA)
- These meetings do not meet physically ever, strictly electronic
- Only listed on WSO website
- May be connected to a geographic area in the future\
- Both the geographic Area and the Global Electronic Area have to agree to this transfer
- Will be an international meeting, people all over the world can find your meeting

## HYBRID, NOW CALLED **PHYSICAL WITH AN ELECTRONIC COMPONENT**

- Both physical & electronic parts of the group must meet on the same day and same time. The members also need to share & interact with each other
- Use current physical WSO ID #
- List with both WSO & the area
- Add “in-person & virtual are occurring simultaneously” to group description on websites
- Use group email address for people to request link to meeting

### **Part 2: Questions and Answers**

For this part of the event, Stephen will moderate an open dialogue, and he briefly explained that questions would be taken one at a time from the audience (using the raise hand option) and both the panel and the audience members would be given an opportunity to respond.

**Q1:** Carmen asked: My group has voted about staying Zoom and joining the Global Electronic Area (GEA). Which means that if we join the GEA, we will be leaving the Oregon Area. But, I am curious about what might be changing in our Area and what Meredith was saying earlier regarding the possibility of the Area opening up and letting electronic meetings join the Area? So where do we go from here?

Answer : Meredith responded. In the last Panel, more than a year ago, a Thought Force did a survey of GRs and DRs related to hybrid, temporary electronic and permanent electronic meetings and the possibility of the Area accepting Permanent Electronic Meetings. One thing learned was that members did not fully understand what hybrid and a permanent electronic meetings were. So this was a matter of educating as to what the actual choices were. After reviewing the survey, the Thought Force concluded it was too soon to make a decision and suggested that this issue be re-looked at by the next Panel. Since then, there have been ideas that have come forward from WSO, Conference and other Areas that address the possibility of electronic meetings joining Areas. Joanne, me and Stephen have been looking at this issue and what could be the next steps towards creating a system that would allow electronic meetings to join the Oregon Area. Are we there yet? No, but we’re having discussions. So groups that have been temporarily meeting electronically in Oregon may want to continue to maintain their temporary electronic meeting status until the Area has a decision to accept a written procedure for accepting and listing permanent electronic meetings in the Area. What we know now from WSO is that with 850 Global Electronic Meetings, there may be less of a concern that a local electronic meeting joining the Area would attract a majority of its members from other parts of the world.

Answer: Stephen responded. It is likely that AWSC will be looking at having a task force on the subject of electronic meetings becoming part of the Area.

**Q2:** Patrice asked: So do I understand it correctly that WSO is considering a third option for meetings which would be physical meetings with an electronic component (also known as, hybrid meetings)? Do we as an Area then accept what WSO puts in place?

Answer: Joanne responded. We’ve heard that WSO is using the term ‘physical meeting with an electronic component’ to replace the term ‘hybrid meeting’. The WSO makes decisions about group guidelines and group record policy, and how meetings are described. So that language is then passed to the Areas.

**Q3:** Joan asked: I have a group in my District that is discussing going entirely Zoom and some members have an interest in staying in the District. What advice can I give them?

Answer: Meredith responded: Maybe they should wait a while before deciding to join the Global Electronic Area as a permanent electronic meeting. Because if they join the GEA, they drop their status as a physical group in the Oregon Area and start up as a new group in the GEA. They no longer have GR voice or vote at the District level or Area level of Oregon. So this is a matter of group conscience to decide what they would like to do.

Answer: Stephen responded: As long as this group stays temporary electronic, having been a physical meeting in Oregon pre-Covid, then they are part of the structure of the Oregon Area with a GR that has voice and vote at the District and Area. This temporary electronic status is for an indefinite period while Areas iron out decisions and procedures about including electronic meetings as permanently able to be part of their Area. Remaining temporary electronic allows time for the Global Electronic Area to iron out how to create Districts and a direct procedure for temporary electronic meetings to transfer to the GEA should they decide to become part of the GEA permanently. If a group joins the Global Electronic Area now, they then have a GR with voice and vote only in the Global Electronic Area. Joining the GEA means joining an Area with 850 electronic meetings represented by one Delegate with GRs that attend GEA Assemblies.

Carol from District 6 added that the WSO registers physical groups and electronic groups, however, the temporary electronic status given to groups that were previously physical remains in effect.

**Q4:** Morgan asks: We have a hybrid meeting. We were concerned if the status of hybrid meetings is changing?

Answer: Joanne stated that hybrid groups, now called physical with electronic component, will continue to be an option for groups.

**Q5:** Diana asks: If a group joins the GEA, can they come back to the Area as an electronic meeting once the Area decides to accept electronic meetings into the Area? And if that happens, does it mean that global members come into the Area?

Answer: Meredith responded: Yes electronic groups from the GEA would be given the option to join the Area based on the procedure we develop for electronic meetings being part of the Area. Yes, that means global members could be attending an Oregon Area electronic meeting.

**Q6:** Mary asks: I have a group that meets in-person every other week and meet on-line every other week. Each meeting is at the same time and same day of the week.

Meredith asked: Did that group send me the information about the group's status? You essentially have 2 meetings, one that meets in-person and one that meets electronically. Meredith will be asking WSO about this.

Mary stated that the group considers this temporary.

**Q7:** Lynn F. asks: I have concerns because I'm not hearing anything about the Traditions in this discussion. I am concerned that if Zoom groups are taken off the District meeting list it is going to fall

very hard on those groups. Are the Traditions going to be a part of the decision making for how groups will be recognized in Oregon.

Answer: Joanne responded: Everything decided about the types of groups comes from the WSO and Conference. The Traditions and Concepts are always considered in decision making. If you are a Zoom meeting within Oregon, you will be listed as a District meeting.

Stephen added: An Oregon Area Task Force on this matter will follow the Traditions, Concepts and KBDM when they develop a procedure for local Zoom meetings to become permanently electronic and join the Area.

**Q8:** Trish asks: Can we create a place on our website to list permanent electronic meetings in the GEA that were previously part of our Area?

Joanne responded: I asked that question of the WSO and the answer was no. Once part of the GEA, your group is listed in the GEA listing on the WSO website.

**Q9:** Norma P. asked: She wants to know about equipment for Hybrid meetings. Is there an ideal set of equipment?

Jacqueline R. responded: A member or she brings a laptop, and the group pays for a zoom account.

Susanne responded: She attends a group that is hybrid and they had struggled to set things up. They work as a team. Someone sets-up/starts the on-line meeting and someone sets-up the in-person meeting. They also use a laptop in the in-person meeting. They recognize that they need a surround sound microphone to pass around.

Ree responded: There is a meeting in D6 that uses Facebook Portal. It's a device that has a microphone on it and a camera. You can control the zoom and pick-up the sound. You need a monitor or tv for the in-person meeting along with wifi. She says it works easily and has been successful.

Stephen responded: LG&G meeting uses a tv which was provided by the Church, a laptop which connects to the tv along with a portable surround sound microphone which can be handed around, and a wide angle camera on top of the tv. If you used a monitor or projector you would need a speaker. There is a service position to manage the on-line meeting, and a service position to set-up the in-person system each meeting. The Church provides wifi. This works very well.

Meladee responded: They used the principle of keep it simple. 2 people volunteer to bring their ipad and a large laptop. There is a seat for who ever wants to speak so no need for a portable microphone. They cannot see everyone but they do see the speaker.

**At this point in time, there was a group conscience to extend the meeting to 9pm, another 30 minutes.**

**Q10:** Aaron F. had a question. He would like a shared document to read about the set-ups that groups are using. Can we create something.

Stephen Responded: We will transcribe today's meeting and make minutes available. Secondly, those of you attending today can email me your set-up and I can put a document together and send it off to GRs and DRs. Be as specific as you wish.

**Q11:** Troy asked: There are a few elderly and disabled folks who were attending the Hugs group on-line but the group decided to return to meeting only in-person. He wants to help with the set-up of a group in the Global Electronic Area.

Meredith suggested that the folks he refers to could more easily find a GEA meeting already listed and running instead of creating a new Global Electronic Meeting. Check those meetings out because there are over 850.

Troy: Does the GEA have a Zoom account for all the meetings?

Stephen: The GEA does not have a shared Zoom account. Each meeting has there own Zoom account.

**Q12:** Susanne said: As the CMA I received the annual group update form and on it was a space to put in a Zoom link.

**Q13:** Phyllis H. asks: Why did WSO decide to use the term physical with an electronic component instead of one word, hybrid? Has there been consideration for allowing each Area to have their own Electronic District?

Stephen responded: The WSO and Conference took the 1<sup>st</sup> step by setting up 1 GEA. We in the Oregon Area are looking into allowing electronic meetings to join the Area. There could be an Electronic District, and/or our current Districts might accept electronic meetings...this is something for a Task Force to look at and consider.

Joanne responded: There will always now be a Global Electronic Area. Oregon would need to develop a process to accept temporary Oregon electronic meetings to be permanent and part of the Area along with accepting meetings that want to transition from the GEA to Oregon.

**Q14:** Meladee spoke: Her District has a group that meets concurrently but separately (split meeting), one on-line meeting and one in-person meeting both at the same time and same day. She wants those who have access to decision making above the Area to advocate and tell them how her District feels about this, and make sure we don't leave anyone behind in our thinking about AI-Anon.

Carol B commented. She mentioned the 2022 Summary of the WSC, there is a section on P.42 about Hybrid vs. split concurrent meetings vs. vision, and it talks about this kind of situation you are raising. The 2022 World Service Conference Summary says: "The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) met recently to discuss this (type of) situation. We reflected on how this situation would be handled in the case of physical groups. Since the time of the pioneers, AI-Anon groups have never been registered with two physical locations. After a thoughtful conversation, SPIRiT agreed we needed to defer the matter to the Policy Committee for consideration."

Mark C. commented. He spoke about a group he attended and how they used group conscience to decide how a meeting is held.

**Q15:** Ree, D6 asked a question: Does Oregon Area have a time-line or end date for all these decisions to be made? It takes time to find unanimity.

Joanne responded: There is no deadline.

**Q16:** Joanne asked to hear from the new Dist. 8 DR, Michelle: Does Oregon have a Task Force on whether Oregon wants to have Electronic meetings? She loves the meetings in the GEA. She went on to talk about her District.

It was now 9pm.

**Closing:**

Stephen spoke: It is now 9pm and we agreed to end at this point. There were 5 people who did not get to ask their question. Please feel free to send an email to me with your questions or reach out to Meredith or Joanne. Their emails are on the Oregon Area website. I am so glad we were able to do this event. Let's have closing remarks from Meredith and Joanne.

Meredith: We have one last poll before we sign off. Thank you all for taking the time on a Tuesday night to share your experience, strength and hope. We stand at a precipice in AI-Anon. We are doing something never done before. We are part of history and have a voice in it.

Joanne spoke: This has been better than I ever could have hoped. Thank you everyone for showing up. We had 74 people attending. AI-Anon is growing and changing. The options are wide-open. I voted yes as a Delegate to accept the GEA. It is an interesting time to be a Delegate. Please reach out with your questions. Let's have Town Halls like this periodically. Have a wonderful meeting. Let's do the poll.

Trish posted the evaluation poll:

Poll: Was this Town Hall helpful?

Very Helpful: 70%

Somewhat Helpful: 20%?

Not Helpful: Did not write down the figure.

No Opinion: Did not write down the figure.