

KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS – DISTRICT 36 OPERATING PROCEDURES

Throughout this document, the meaning of the words and phrases specific to Alcoholics Anonymous will be defined as in the most recent edition of the “A.A. Service Manual” (2016-2018) unless specifically defined for the purpose of clarification by the collective, informed group conscience of Kingston and the Islands – District 36. The words, ‘The Table’ are used, in this document, to refer to the District 36 District Committee – General Service Representatives, Subcommittee Chairs and Officers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the District 36 Operating Procedures is to provide direction for the successful conduct of the business of District 36. There are no rules in A.A. except those we impose upon ourselves. All provisions of these guidelines and all actions of District 36 ought to conform to the principles of the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts for World Service. All activities of the District are directed toward, and ought to reflect, A.A.’s primary purpose - TO CARRY THE MESSAGE TO THE ALCOHOLIC WHO STILL SUFFERS.

WHO ARE WE?

District 36, Area 83 of Alcoholics Anonymous is a geographical area in South-Eastern Ontario reaching from Odessa in the west to Gananoque in the east. As of February 2018, the District is comprised of 23 A.A. groups holding 39 public meetings, 5 service meetings and supporting 6 institutional groups.

An A.A. group is defined in the long form of *Tradition Three*, and in Concept 12 Warranty Six from the *Twelve Concepts For World Service*, as follows: “Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

We welcome diversity and offer tolerance and respect to all members of our worldwide fellowship without discriminating against individuals or groups based on their beliefs or practice of A.A.’s suggested program of recovery.

1. HOW DOES IT WORK?

1 a. NAME: District 36 will be referred to as Kingston and the Islands – District 36.

1 b. COMPOSITION: The District Table is composed of the following:

- i) General Service Representative (GSR):** A GSR is the group member elected by their Group to represent the Group at the District Table (as described in the *A.A. Service Manual* and the pamphlet 'The A.A. Group').
- ii) Sub-committee Chairs:**
 - Public Information/Cooperation With the Professional Community
 - Correctional Facilities
 - Treatment Facilities
 - Grapevine
 - Archives
 - Telephone Link Committee
 - Accessibilities
- iii) The District Committee (Table Officers):**
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary/Registrar
 - Alternate District Committee Member (ADCM)
 - District Committee Member (DCM)
- iv) Non-voting Table position**
 - Webmaster

2. THE DISTRICT MEETING

- a) MEETING TIME AND LOCATION:** The Table will meet on the last Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. This will be a Hybrid meeting. This portion of the meeting will be held at Kingston Alliance Church, corner of Bath Road and Palace Road in Kingston. The online portion will be held on Zoom. The meeting ID: 853 4653 2365 and the password : district.
- b) MEETING STATUS:** The monthly District 36 Meeting is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. All A.A. members are welcome to attend, as are escorts from institutions. Non-members may attend with the approval of The Table.
- c) ATTENDANCE:**
 - i)** All District officers, Sub-committee Chairs and GSRs are expected to attend the monthly District meeting or to send an alternate. Attendance is taken at the **Roll Call**. The Secretary will record the results and the DCM will determine if there is a Quorum.
 - ii)** If an Officer or Sub-committee Chair is absent for two consecutive meetings, even if they have sent in a written report electronically, they will be contacted by the DCM to see if they are still able to serve. If a third consecutive meeting is missed, The Table has the right to replace the person through the election process as set out below, or otherwise agreed upon.

iii) Any member of a group in District 36 may attend the District meeting. Although these members may, at the Chair's discretion, have an opportunity to speak about a motion or issue before The Table, they have no voting privileges.

d) **OPENING:** The DCM, as Chair of the meeting, is encouraged to make opening remarks such as; "Welcome to the District 36 Monthly Business Meeting. Let us open the meeting with a moment of silence for the still suffering alcoholic followed by the Serenity Prayer." And, "Out of consideration to those of us with chemical sensitivities, we urge participants not to use products with a strong scent such as perfume, make-up, shampoo, deodorant, etc."

e) **ROLL CALL:** Before each District 36 meeting formally starts, the DCM will ask the Secretary to take a Roll Call of all Groups (and institutional Groups if an inside member is present), Sub-committee Chairs and Officers. The Secretary will record the results and the DCM will determine if there is a Quorum. Then the DCM will ask any visitors to identify themselves...

f) **QUORUM:** A Quorum is the minimum number of voting members that must be present at a District 36 Monthly Business Meeting in order for the Meeting to be valid. In District 36, no voting can take place unless there is a Quorum, i.e. more than 50% of The Table members are present as indicated by the Roll Call and 2/3 are voting as GSRs. If a GSR also holds a position as a Table Officer or Sub-Committee chair is vacant, this position will not be counted when determining total eligible votes to achieve a Quorum. For roll call, they would be counted as GSR. An institutional group will only be counted in Roll Call when an inside member is present at the table to act as their GSR. If there is no Quorum, then all business before The Table that requires a vote will be tabled until the next District 36 Monthly Business Meeting.

g) **REPORTS:** All Officers, Sub-committee Chairs and *ad hoc* committee chairs are expected to prepare a written report for The Table to give GSRs an idea of what is going on in the Sub-committees and at Area. GSRs also give reports to let The Table know what is going on at the group level. All reports must be sent electronically to the Secretary within 5 days of the Business Meeting for inclusion in the minutes.

h) **OLD BUSINESS:** Old Business is business arising from prior District meeting minutes, such as delayed votes, Notices of Motion, or from an issue that had been tabled at a past meeting for future consideration.

i) **NEW BUSINESS:** New business is any new matter brought before The Table for the first time. This is also the part of the meeting where the DCM will schedule items to be addressed that arise from Area business meetings or Area Assemblies. New agenda items may be sent electronically to the DCM for inclusion in this section of the Agenda. Motions may also be made at The Table. In all cases, a written copy must be submitted to the Secretary to be read to The Table for inclusion in the Minutes.

The Secretary will pass a New Business sheet around the table during the meeting. If there is a new item to add to the agenda, it may be written on this paper. The Chair will prioritize these items for inclusion in New Business.

j) MOTION TO END THE MEETING: A Motion needs to be made to end the business meeting. A Second is required. All pending motions will be tabled until the next business meeting. This motion takes immediate precedence and is not discussed. Needs a Simple Majority vote to pass.

k) CLOSING THE MEETING: The Business Meeting closes with an invitation from the Chair to recite the A.A. Responsibility Statement; *“I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”*

l) SEATING AND TABLE ARRANGEMENT: We are responsible for setting up the room and stacking the tables and chairs afterward. Please stack your own chairs and help if possible.

3. VOTING PRIVILEGES:

a) GROUP CONSCIENCE: When A.A. members vote on a motion, whether in their group, at The Table or Area Assembly, the vote is called “taking a group conscience”.

b) AN INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE: The group conscience is the collective conscience of the membership of District 36. The goal in any decision-making process in A.A. is to have substantial unanimity on the issue being voted on. A group conscience is achieved by group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view and the practice of A.A.’s principles. To be fully informed, members must be willing to listen to minority opinions with respect and an open mind. The term “informed group conscience” implies that all pertinent information has been studied and all views heard before the group votes.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly – discouraging formal motions until a sense of the collective view becomes clear. Placing “principles before personalities”, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. The group conscience emerges when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “Yes” or “No” count – precisely because a decision represents a spiritual expression of the group’s conscience.

c) WHO VOTES: All members of The Table, except the DCM, will be eligible to vote on matters brought before The Table unless otherwise specified by a group conscience. 2/3 of those present must be GSR’s in order for any vote to take place. If a GSR is absent, their alternate may vote. If neither is present, a representative of the group may vote. No voting by proxy will be permitted.

The DCM does not vote unless required to break a tie.

d) VOTE COUNTING: When a 2/3 vote is required for a Motion to pass, only “Yes” and “No” votes will be counted. Abstentions will not count. The total of the “Yes” and “No” votes must total 50% or more of Quorum. In order for a Motion to pass and be adopted by District 36, a 2/3 Majority in favour of the motion must be attained. If there is no Quorum, the matter being discussed will be tabled until the next District Meeting.

e) SPECIAL VOTES: From time-to-time, a motion may come before The Table that requires an informed group conscience of the membership in the District. On such an occasion, the motion will be referred back to the groups for their discussion and vote. In these circumstances, subsequent voting at The Table will be restricted to the GSR’s or to authorized group representatives present at The Table. It is presumed that Committee Chairs and Area Officers will have already had an opportunity to discuss and vote on the issue in their home group. **Each group in the District will be entitled to 1 vote.**

4. MOTIONS AND NOTICE OF MOTION:

a) DISCUSSION PRIOR TO MAKING A MOTION: In A.A., cooperation is assumed. However, it is often counterproductive to introduce a main motion before there has been some discussion of the matter before The Table. After some discussion, the intent of the group is usually clearer, and the Chair can be of service by summarizing what they have heard into a coherent motion, and asking if anyone is willing to introduce the Motion. If so, the Motion will be written down, passed to the Secretary, and read back to The Table.

b) NOTICE OF MOTION: A Notice of Motion is a matter brought to The Table to be voted upon at a future meeting. No Secunder is needed. The Table is merely being introduced to the issue. A Notice of Motion shall specify the period for consideration of the motion as being either one month or two months. The DCM will then add the motion to the Agenda for the corresponding future month. When a Notice of Motion is made there is NO discussion at the current Table. The presenter of the motion will provide the Secretary/Registrar, electronically, with a copy of the Notice of Motion in writing for inclusion in the minutes and/or discussion by the groups.

c) MOTIONS: A motion is a suggestion to The Table to take a course of action, make a decision or to have District 36 express an opinion. Motions shall be made **in writing** either before or during the District Meeting. The correct wording is, “I move that...”. Any motion prepared in advance may be forwarded electronically to the DCM to be included on the Agenda for the up-coming meeting. The Motion will be read aloud by the Secretary so the person proposing the Motion can approve the wording. All Motions must be Seconded by another member of The Table before the matter goes into discussion. The correct wording is “I second the Motion...” All motions must be seconded in order to proceed to a discussion.

Since our aim is always to seek substantial unanimity, a motion must have a 2/3 Majority to be carried unless otherwise stated or agreed. It will be the decision of the group conscience of The Table whether voting should immediately follow discussion of the motion or whether voting on the motion should take place at a subsequent meeting.

d) DISCUSSING A MOTION: Only members of The Table may speak during discussion of any issue. When discussing a Motion, each person at The Table is expected to be considerate of the time, be respectful of each other and to conduct the discussion in a civil manner. All comments are to be directed to the DCM/Chair. Crosstalk will not be permitted. We strive always to place “principles before personalities”.

If you wish to participate in the discussion, please raise your hand and the Chair will record your name. When the Chair says your name, you may speak.

e) AMENDING A MOTION: After being recognized by the Chair, any member may introduce a **subsidiary motion** while the main motion is being discussed. A subsidiary motion affects the motion under discussion. Many amendments are “friendly”, such as slightly changing the wording of a motion for clarity. The original mover of the Motion has to approve the amendment. However, if the mover objects, a 2/3 Majority vote will be required to amend the original motion. An amendment can re-word or replace a main motion without voting it down. Once Seconded, a subsidiary motion must be dealt with before discussion on the main motion can resume.

f) TABLING A MOTION: A motion may be made to Table the Motion until a specific time. This will delay the vote. A Simple Majority is required in order to Table a Motion.

A Tabled Motion may be re-introduced at any time, by any member of The Table, after one different item of business has been resolved. If a second meeting goes by without The Tabled Motion being re-introduced to The Table, the motion is dead. A Simple Majority vote is required to re-introduce a Tabled Motion.

g) MOTION TO REFER TO COMMITTEE: If The Table feels that more discussion is needed on a Motion or more information is needed before a vote can take place, the motion may be tabled to a later meeting. Some matters may require the formation of an *Ad Hoc* Committee or a formal request to one of the Sub-committees to study a matter and bring recommendations back to The Table. If this occurs, a motion may be made to **Refer to Committee**. A Sub-committee or an *Ad Hoc* (formed for a particular purpose only) Committee may be struck and a Chair elected. The Committee Chair shall determine how the Committee is to be structured and how it will operate.

h) SPECIAL MOTIONS: Any motion requiring a financial expenditure by the District must be presented as a Notice of Motion so The Table can consider it for a one-month period.

Regular bills and normally agreed upon expenses for the District Committee and Subcommittee Chairs can be voted on as a regular motion.

i) POINT OF INFORMATION: If, during a discussion, you are not sure of the procedure being used, you may call for a **“Point of Information”**. The Chair will ask you to state your question and attempt to clarify the situation.

j) POINT OF ORDER: If you are concerned that the rules of order have been violated, you can call for a **“Point of Order”**. This will immediately stop all discussion at The Table and help the Chair get the meeting back on track.

k) MINORITY RIGHTS: After a group conscience, those opposed to the decision will be given an opportunity to speak. After the minority speaks to the issue, the Chair will ask The Table if anyone in the Majority wants to change their vote. If one of the majority decides to change their vote, discussion is re-opened and a new vote will then be taken.

l) CROSSTALK: At the District 36 Table, we try to have an open, respectful discussion of any issue being considered so that we can learn from each other. We allow those who have been recognized by the Chair to speak without comment or interruption. We discourage giving advice, whispered conversations between members and judgemental words or gestures. *“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”*

m) CALLING THE QUESTION: During the discussion, someone may request the Chair to **“Call the Question”**. This is a motion used to cut off debate on an issue and proceed directly to a vote on the motion being discussed. It requires a Secunder. Calling the Question is out of order when a member is speaking. A motion to Call the Question cannot be debated. It requires a 2/3 Majority to pass because the right of the members to debate is being curtailed. When appropriate, the Chair, on advice of The Table, or out of a concern for order, may Table the Motion or call for a vote. As always, the group conscience of The Table shall prevail.

5. OPEN SHARING TIME:

Time permitting, at the end of the formal part of the District Business Meeting, visitors may be invited to speak to The Table about observations, concerns and questions.

6. VOICE:

a) CHAIR: All discussion at The Table is chaired by the DCM. If the DCM is unable to be present, the ADCM or another Officer will chair the Meeting.

b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR: The Chair manages the discussion by listing and recognizing, in order, all those who wish to speak to a matter under discussion. At the

discretion of the Chair, any member of Alcoholics Anonymous may be heard at The Table. The Table members shall be heard first, followed by visitors.

Each speaker will have an appropriate amount of time to share, as determined by the Chair, but will speak to a matter only once. A second opportunity to speak may be granted at the Chair's discretion, but only after all those who wish to speak to an issue have had an opportunity to speak. An exception may arise when questions are being directed to the mover of the Motion from members of The Table through the Chair. In this case, the mover of the Motion may respond to any questions which arise. When appropriate, the DCM, on the advice of The Table, or for the concern of order, may discontinue the discussion and/or call for a vote, by appropriate motion, to be passed with a 2/3 Majority. As always, the group conscience of The Table shall prevail. The Chair does not participate in the discussion. The major responsibility of the Chair is to maintain order during the discussion.

c) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS: All members of Alcoholics Anonymous may be heard at The Table. However, to facilitate order in the discussion, **you may not speak unless you have been recognized by the Chair.** All comments will be directed to the Chair. **Out of respect for all present, only one person at a time may speak.** Out of respect for all present, participants will remain seated while addressing The Table.

7. ELECTIONS:

a) POSITION DESCRIPTIONS: A detailed description of the responsibilities of the District Committee and Sub-committee Chairs is found in Appendix A.

b) REGULAR BI-ANNUAL ELECTION:

i) Bi-annual elections will be held every two years, in even-numbered years, to elect the District Committee and Sub-committee Chairs for a two-year term beginning in the next calendar year (e.g. October 2016 for a term beginning January 2017). Elections will take place at The Table in the autumn, usually at the September meeting. Elections will precede the Area 83 Assembly, which usually takes place in the last two weeks of October. If two or more candidates for a position are nominated, the successful candidate is to be elected by written ballot as per Third Legacy procedures as set out in the *A.A. Service Manual*. Prior to the vote, the Third Legacy procedure will be read to The Table from the Service Manual. A non-voting, self-declaring-ineligible voting member will be chosen by the DCM to facilitate the election. This individual will ensure that scrutineers are available, if necessary, to help with the tally of written ballots.

ii) Nominations: Nominations for District service positions may be made in writing and submitted electronically to the DCM prior to the appropriate September District meeting.

Nominations must be made by a voting member of the current Table. Each candidate will be asked if they would like to take on the service position being proposed. If they say “Yes”, then they stand for the position.

c) Acclamation: A member may be acclaimed to a position if no other candidate for that position is nominated and has agreed to serve. The in-coming members should try to attend District 36, Sub-committee, and Area 83 meetings, to familiarize themselves with their new position prior to taking office in January.

d) Positions to be elected and order of election:

1. District Committee Member (DCM);
2. Alternate District Committee Member (ADCM);
3. Secretary/Registrar;
4. Treasurer;
5. Public Information/Cooperation With the Professional Community Chair (PIC/CPC)
6. Correctional Facilities Chair;
7. Grapevine Chair;
8. Archives Chair;
9. Treatment Facilities Chair;
10. Telephone Link Committee Chair.
11. Accessibilities Chair

e) Alternate Chairs of Sub-committees: Will be sought from the members of the Sub-committees or from a call for nominations from the floor at the District meeting. Alternate chairs will be elected by The Table upon the recommendation of the Sub-committee Chair.

f) Eligibility: All members of Alcoholics Anonymous who belong to a group in District 36 may stand for a District service position, including out-going Officers and Sub-committee Chairs, as long as they are nominated by a voting member of the current Table.

- i) Candidates eligible to stand for election must be present at the vote or have sent in their permission in writing along with a written resume to be read to The Table.

ii) Before the election is held, each nominee will be asked if they wish to serve. If they do, they will be asked to say a few words about their service history in A.A. If the person is not present, their resume will be read. If no nominations are forthcoming from The Table, then previous members of The Table may present a nomination.

iii) Each position at The Table may have specific requirements for eligibility. Please see Appendix A.

g) Voting for Alternate Chairs: All members of the out-going Table except for the DCM have a vote. Voting will take place by a show of hands unless otherwise stated. If a group GSR is not present, the in-coming GSR may vote. If an Alternate GSR is available, they may vote in the place of the GSR. If neither the GSR nor the Alternate is available, a member of their home group, if present, may vote.

h) Term of Service: All elected Officers, Sub-committee Chairs, and Alternate Sub-committee Chairs will assume office on January 1, in odd numbered years, following their election. They should attend up-coming District and Area meetings in order to familiarize themselves with their new positions. All terms of service are for two years.

i) Interim Elections: If, for any reason, a position at The Table becomes vacant, the Alternate will be asked to take responsibility for the position until an election occurs. If there is no Alternate, a member of The Table may be asked to assume certain responsibilities until an election occurs. Candidates for the position may also be recruited by members of The Table from the membership of District 36. Election procedures will be followed as outlined above.

8. NEW GROUPS AND NEW MEETINGS:

a) New Groups: A Group is defined in the current addition of the AA service Manuel (*The A.A. Service Manual* (The Group and its general Service Representative) available for download at aa.org. The GSO pamphlet "*The A.A. Group*" is also a very helpful resource. Hard copies are usually available for sale at the Spring and Fall assemblies. The GSO pamphlet "*The AA Group*" is also a helpful resource.

b) All new Groups are to be introduced to The Table by the DCM at a District meeting prior to the Group being added to the District website. Upon the formation of a Group, receipt by the Group of a group number from A.A. World Services and election of a GSR, the new group will be invited by the DCM to take a seat at The Table. Upon delivery of the group information to the District Secretary/Registrar, the Secretary/Registrar will pass on the new group information to the Area Registrar, to The Table and, following the next District meeting, to the Webmaster for inclusion on the District 36 website. A new group is required to exist for 6 months in order to be included on the *printed* meeting list. Upon formation, the

PIC/CPC Chair will be notified by the Secretary/Registrar that a new group has formed in order to keep future inclusions to the printed Meeting list up-to-date.

c) New Meetings: The procedure for adding a new Meeting to the website and printed meeting list is similar to that for a new group. Once the Meeting has been established, a Representative of the meeting will contact the District Secretary/Registrar to provide information about the new Meeting. Following their introduction at the next District meeting, the Secretary/Registrar will pass on the Meeting information to the Webmaster, the Area Registrar and, where appropriate, to the PIC/CPC Chair for future up-dates to the printed meeting list.

Each new Meeting should name a Representative to serve as a point of contact between the meeting and The Table. Meeting Representatives have no voting privileges at The Table.

9. EXPENSES:

a) District 36 will reimburse Officers and Sub-committee chairs for costs of travel, accommodations and meals when that person is required to represent our District at assemblies and meetings held outside District 36. From time-to-time The Table will consider allowable maximum expenditures for travel, accommodation and meals. The Table must authorize all service travel in advance. The Table will authorize payment upon receipt of an Expense Report and accompanying receipts showing details of the expenses. (For an Expense Report Form, see Appendix E)

b) District 36 will reimburse District Officers and Sub-committee chairs for expenses such as telephone, postage, photocopy supplies and literature that is required for them to carry out their duties on behalf of the District in amounts pre-approved by The Table upon receipt by the District Treasurer of an Expense Report (see Appendix E) and accompanying receipts showing details of the expenses.

c) Sub-committee Budgets: If funds are available, each Sub-committee is allocated \$150.00 twice a year to carry the message. Each Committee is expected to record all business expenditures, provide receipts to the Treasurer to account for monies spent, and keep District up to date on financial activities. Any other amounts allocated to Sub-committees are to be determined on a case-by-case basis after the Sub-committee Chair submits a budgetary request and The Table approves an appropriate amount. These expenditures must also be tracked and supported by receipts submitted to the Treasurer.

Sub-committee budget requests, such as Meeting List printings, may be submitted to The Table at any time of the year.

DISTRICT 36 OPERATING PROCEDURES

d) In Memorial Fund. Upon the death of any member of The Table, the District shall make a donation of \$25.00 to the 'In Memorial Fund' at GSO.

10. An updated, on-line copy of the District 36 Operating Procedures and Service Guidelines will be made available on the District 36 website in a timely manner.