

## Just for Today “Committees Task Team” Meeting Agenda

Time and Date: 23 Jan 2021 8:15 am-9:15am

- **Opening** (Facilitator Liz D)
  - A volunteer read the 12 Traditions.
  - Liz D. introduced and thanked VMH(s) and Note-taker
  - Liz D. Read and reviewed the Meeting Process and Guidance as per the agenda, noting that the purpose of our task is to discuss best practices for Steering Committees going forward.
  - Liz D. reviewed the Agenda Overview and Purpose of meeting as per the agenda. She noted that members have submitted information on the Beacon Street Group and how they are organizing their steering committees. This can be found on the agenda posted on the JFT website under Other Research. Please note that on page 16 are their Rules of Operation, which might be of interest to us.
  - Liz D. read and reviewed the background of the Steering Committees
    - A volunteer read “An AA Informed Group Conscience”
- **Conduct of JFT Virtual Meeting Steering Committees** (Steering Committee)
  - Liz D. posed the question: Should Steering Committee be open to all?  
A lively discussion ensued. Comments included:
    - A member asked for clarification: Should the Steering Committees be open to all JFT members or just Steering Committee members? If opened to all JFT members, then should it be open with criteria, i.e. minimum length of sobriety.
    - A member asked if the Steering Committees can now make decisions or just recommendations? JFT Secretary clarified that it was now decisions about technical matters and format and that they report them to the Business Meeting.
    - A member asked If Steering Committees are open, how are these different from Business Meetings, and whether we even need Steering Committees anymore? Liz D. clarified that Beacon Street Steering committee makes decisions and committee members are elected at the group’s Business Meeting and are considered “representative” steering committees.
    - A member read from the AA pamphlet, “Why do we need a steering committee?” The summary seems to be that steering committees discuss and present for group conscience.
    - JFT Secretary noted that before the pandemic we ran two meetings with one Business Meeting. We are now four meetings under one Business Meeting. This is too much. We are now acting as different meetings.
    - Liz D. noted that she is hearing two themes, that (1) the Steering Committees may be able to make decisions but if so (2) we want openness and transparency. She called for any objections.

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A lively discussion ensued. Comments included:

- o A member noted that this is a challenging question.
- o A member asked are the meetings open? Meeting times, agenda, and minutes published? Who votes?
- o A member asked if there was one Steering Committee or two?
- o JFT Secretary noted that a previous Business Meeting voted to give the Steering Committees the authority to make decisions about formatting and structure for their meetings.
- o JFT Secretary noted that we do not currently have a practice of issuing an open call/invitation to the Steering Committee publishing the time and place of Steering Committee meetings.
- o Liz D. asked if we want the Steering Committees to make decisions or suggestions? Do we want to get rid of Steering Committees entirely? Or ask Steering Committees to give recommendations?
- o A member asked if this was only for pandemic? Liz D. said that she was assuming indefinitely.
- o A member noted that there were no good means to communicate to the general group about decisions under discussion.
- o A member noted that Steering Committees should make recommendations to the larger business meeting. She further noted that formatting is not just about little things.
- o A member noted that we trust the Steering Committees, but AA is about group conscience. We should not delegate group conscience.
- o A member noted the importance of being an inclusive group.
- o Liz D. said she was hearing two themes: (1) The steering committees acts as recommenders; and (2) Increased openness.
- o A member suggested that there be two Steering Committees for both the 6 AM virtual and in-person meetings and the 7 AM virtual and in-person meetings. That these be open to everyone with discrete bodies within to make decisions.
- o JFT secretary notes that per the last business meeting, the JFT Alt. Secretary and onsite meeting members are considering whether they want to form a steering committee for their meetings.
- o A member noted that Steering Committee decisions can have broad implications, i.e., decision to disable chat.
- o The JFT Secretary noted that the decision to disable chat was voted on in a Business Meeting early in the pandemic.
- o A member noted that people are not clamoring to get into the Steering Committees. He

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further noted that JFT has trusted servants, such as a GSR representative. We don't micromanage them.

- Liz D. asked for a show of hands to show agreement for this question: Should the steering committees we have today make recommendations to the Business Meeting rather than make decisions?

14 in favor (Liz D. noted this represented a slim minority of the 31 members then-present.)

- The above was refined by a member as: Are you in favor of limited decision making for the steering committees to be defined at a Business Meeting?

22 in favor

- Liz D. noted that we have heard the tension. She suggested that she add the research to the meeting notes and that these will be given to the Business Meeting.
- The JFT Secretary made the following comments:
  - o We have not pushed through some of these issues.
  - o She wanted to express her gratitude to the Steering Committees for what they have done.
  - o The Business meeting used to be for two meetings. We have four meetings with four cultures and sets of practices. She suggests that when we make decisions impacting JFT as a whole, these discussions should come to the Business Meeting. Decisions impacting only the individual meetings such as format could achieve a group conscience from those who attend that meeting; and may not need to be considered by the whole Business Meeting.
- Liz D. suggested we have another meeting.
  - o A member suggested we impose time limits on discussion.
  - o Liz D. asked for a show of hands in support of another meeting.

There was clear support for doing another meeting.

- Liz D. thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.
- Meeting closed at 9:17 AM

Respectfully submitted,  
Johanna G.  
Member of JFT, Arlington, MA