

WEBSITE THOUGHT FORCE KBDM

Charge: Thought Force - To investigate Website Support, presenting options from consulting firms, including service level commitments and pricing. To be presented to AWSC and Spring Assembly, 2024.

Thought Force Chair: Cecilia S

FRAMING:

The Ohio Area is seeking exploring options to use a paid consultant / special worker to maintain our website (OhioAl-Anon.org) which has been maintained by a volunteer for over 15 years.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Historical Perspective

The Ohio Area website is 20+ year and has been maintained by Mike K. for 15+ years. He has requested to be rotated off of this service, but no one has volunteered. The current site is based on Mobirus, a tool which generates HTML code which Mike then uploads to the host server. No consultants could be found who support this software.

Prospective consultants were selected using the following criteria.

- Known experience with other 12 Step service bodies.
- Represent a variety of development platforms.

The following request for proposals was sent to each consultant

Al-Anon is a Twelve Step organization who support friends and family of alcoholics. Our groups are organized into Intergroups and these intergroups are combined into areas. The State of Ohio is one such area.

The Ohio Area website is very static with much information provided through links to our World Service Office (afg.org). Here is a list of current ongoing changes

- Four times per year, posting of 20-30 files.
- The calendar is a simple list of these four events
- Only files for 2024.
- No redesign of entire site – use existing page organization and navigation.

Existing Motions that pertain: None

Membership Needs, Wants & Preferences

- Members want past files to be available for download. It is not clear if all of the existing archived files need to be copied over (some go back 20+ years). List of files shown below.

RECENT FILES	COUNT	DATE
Upload AWSC files	29	2024
Upload Spring Assy files	30	2024
Upload Fall AWSC files	24	2024
Upload Two Day Fall files	24	2024
Upload AWSC Minutes	4	
Detail Files (Agenda, etc)	90	2022, 2023
TOTAL NUMBER OF FILES	201	

OLDER FILES	COUNT	DATE
Ohio Assy Minutes	32	2003, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012-2024
AWSC Minutes	37	2003, 2004, 2009, 2009-2024
Delegate Reports	20	2015-2024
Al-A-Notes	15	2015-2020
TOTAL NUMBER OF FILES	104	

Here are the proposals received from the five vendors and our current costss.

Company	Platform	Migrate Website	Maintain Website Annually	Tech costs year 1 (assume 5 months)	Tech costs year 2+	Annual Cost Ongoing	Comments
MOJO	WordPress	1,780	200	365	570	770	Build discounted \$2,000. Used by Cleveland District
Heather Rose Design	WordPress	2,250	300	300	480	780	Min \$50/mo maintenance. Used by other 12 Step
Creative Products	Ionus	2,997	DIY File Upload 100 Misc	125	250	350	Can learn to upload files ourselves. Platform used by Districts of Toledo
Nova Luna	Wix Studio	2,800	400	200	200	600	Tech costs 70% discount first 2 yrs
Current Costs	HTML				177	177	

What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this discussion? What do we wish we knew but don't?

Volunteer Capacity:

- No one has stepped forward to support the web site despite repeated appeals. If we moved forward with a consultant, we would need a non-technical volunteer to serve as a point-of-contact.

Wish we knew if we be able to find a volunteer to be the point of contact.

- Cleveland AIS has a website which includes a blog. This is an area where announcements can be posted by non-technical volunteers.

Wish we knew if we were interested to pay extra to develop this capability and if volunteers could be found to support such a capability.

Financial Capacity:

- The amounts are sizeable, and our capacity to pay this on an ongoing basis must be carefully analyzed.

Wish we knew if we will be able to sustain the initial and ongoing expense. Also, we don't know how drastically these costs are likely to rise.

Strategic Position:

- Ohio Area has recently decided to continue having hybrid (Zoom and in-person) business meetings for three years. As more activities are done in a hybrid fashion, the importance of distributing information electronically increases.

What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

The reality is that we are not able to support our website with volunteer resources. Also, consultants to build and maintain websites are not cheap. The underlying dynamic is that these services will become even more expensive.

What are the ethical implications of our choices (pro and cons)? This will include consideration of how the Legacies apply.

PRO	
Relief to our trusted servant Concept 11: balance of authority and responsibility	Website support has been done by one person for over 15 years. This continues in spite repeated requests to step down from this position for <i>years</i> . At some point, this is taking advantage of someone's willingness to serve.
Rotation of service: Flexibility, cooperation, willingness to trust	Rotation of service needs to be supported even when it is not easy or cheap.

Participation will foster harmony cooperation, mutual respect and trust,	As we involve more people in the website's support, we offer more service opportunities to members and encourage enhancements to the site.
Change and growth flexibility balanced with carefully defined service authority	When burdening one person, Ohio Area has been reluctant to make more than the very minimum of changes.

CONS	
Expense	We are moving from a free resource to an expensive one.
Lack of Flexibility	The consultant will charge for changes we make. Changing our mind or expanding functionality will generate additional costs.

Suggestions:

Form a Task Force to decide on a vendor to propose a vendor to Fall AWSC.

Interview consultants, confirm/update requirements of website and decide on which vendor to use.
Identify volunteer(s?) to serve as a point of contact for the consultant.