

2024 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums

ITEM A: Discuss an anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony to be taken at the 2025 International Convention.

Background notes:

An anonymity protected photo has been taken at each International Convention since the first one in 1950. Since 1994, the General Service Conference has approved the taking of this photograph at the Convention.

Note: there were no Advisory Actions regarding the photo before the 1994 Action.

In the year prior to the International Convention, the process has been for the trustees' Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums (IC/RF) to discuss and agree to forward to the Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums this agenda item.

From the report of the January 27, 2024, trustees' IC/RF Committee meeting:

“The committee agreed to forward to the 2024 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums the discussion of an anonymity-protected photo of the flag ceremony to be taken at the 2025 International Convention.”

Prior recommendation of the 2014 Conference IC/RF Committee for the 2015 International Convention that resulted in an Advisory Action:

“It was recommended that: ‘An anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony be taken at the 2015 International Convention.’”

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2024 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums

ITEM B: Discuss an encrypted, anonymity-protected, delayed Internet broadcast of the Convention Flag Ceremony for the 2025 International Convention.

Background notes:

One of the major highlights of each International Convention is the parade of flags at the Opening Meeting on Friday evening. The Flag Ceremony sets the celebratory and international tone for the Convention weekend with a display of 90+ flags representing countries whose members are attending the Convention.

Starting with the 2005 International Convention in Toronto and approved by the General Service Board and General Service Conference, a *limited* broadcast of this event was shared with General Service Conference areas in the U.S./Canada and with General Service Offices overseas. It required a unique password along with technical requirements to access the Flag Ceremony on the Internet. Access was available approximately 9 hours after the end of the Flag Ceremony, which allowed time for editing to ensure anonymity and to launch the broadcast. Each area was given the opportunity to broadcast the Flag Ceremony up to six times, and each foreign G.S.O. could show it once. The broadcast spanned over 48 hours. In 2005, the broadcast was accessed 1,760 times.

In 2009, the General Service Board agreed that over the 2010 International Convention weekend, unlimited access to an encrypted, anonymity-protected Internet broadcast of the 2010 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony would be available through G.S.O.'s A.A. website (this meant that passwords would no longer be required). This was followed by approval from the 2009 General Service Conference. The broadcast of the 2010 International Convention Flag Ceremony began early Saturday morning (July 3) and ended on Monday morning (July 5) at midnight EST. The broadcast was available in English, French and Spanish and was accessed 13,790 times through G.S.O.'s A.A. website.

In 2014 the General Service Conference approved a recommendation for an anonymity protected internet broadcast of the 2015 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony. The broadcast began on Saturday morning, July 4 through G.S.O.'s A.A. website and was extended until Friday, July 17, 2015. No password or access code was required. The ceremony was viewed a total of 448,165 times during that period.

Lesson learned in 2015: Following the closing of the Big Meeting, you will be required to meet with the producer to edit the video for anonymity protection. This is a long process and may require several hours (2-3 hours). We would encourage rethinking this process,

as the editing process can be very long and intense. In 2015, after the Friday night ceremony, we did not finish the editing until 5:00 a.m. We suggest announcing the broadcast for Monday morning, as opposed to Saturday morning for the 2025 International Convention.

From the Minutes of the January 27, 2024, trustees' IC/RF Committee meeting:

“The committee agreed to forward to the 2024 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums the discussion of an anonymity-protected, delayed Internet broadcast of the Convention Flag Ceremony for the 2025 International Convention.”

Prior recommendation of the 2014 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums for the 2015 International Convention that resulted in an Advisory Action:

“It was recommended that: ‘an encrypted, anonymity-protected Internet broadcast of the 2015 International Convention Opening Flag Ceremony be approved.’”

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2024 Conference Committee on International Conventions/Regional Forums

ITEM C: Discuss a report concerning virtual programming for the 2025 International Convention.

Background notes:

The following background notes and attached background documents detail the information that make up a reporting of the trustees' IC-RF Committee's discussion of adding a virtual program track offering at the 2025 International Convention for the first time in our history.

At the January 27, 2024, meeting of the trustees' IC-RF Committee the question was posed for further information to be gathered for consideration of the following idea:

- 1. Adding a participatory virtual program session like "A.A. Around the World" as part of the purchase of a three Big Meetings product.**

On February 9, 2024, at an interim meeting of the trustees' IC-RF Committee the members confirmed that the two ideas needed to be separated.

One idea is a product offering of the three Big meetings.

The other concept was a true virtual session track that people could register for if unable to attend the 2025 International Convention in person allowing for broader participation across the Fellowship in this anniversary event.

With the help of one of your trustees' Committee members, Talley Management and the 2025 International Convention Coordinator researched the concept and took the following into consideration:

- 1) Full hybrid and do the two A.A. Around the World sessions only.

OR

- 2) Set up one-way virtual, no hybrid (no sharing from those online) and consider doing it for all sessions in that room. i.e.: the 2 A.A. Around the World sessions and all others that are scheduled in the same space or all of Saturday only if easier/significant cost difference.

Rationale: This is an international convention and international travel always has difficulties, more so today with communicable disease concerns and political unrest. The international A.A. community has especially embraced virtual meeting technology and the GSB has previously engaged in several ways, continuing to do so – it is very incongruent

to say it is not possible or an anonymity break for this event when the GSB itself has used virtual meeting technology for several different events.

Opportunities: Focus on the international element, basing the plan around the A.A. Around the World sessions, either only or as an anchor point – allowing us to meet the needs of A.A. members around the world who cannot attend as well as offer a true “international” convention experience for those in the US and Canada who are opting for the Big meeting recordings, and seeking virtual engagement. This offers a limited and contained option and provides some basis for why we picked some meetings and not others.

Considerations: Full faces – we have done with WSM, Redela, North/South Connection, Regional Forums, and the General Service Conference. Other A.A. events not hosted by us, including very large ones like the International Women’s Conference manage this hybrid.

Our members have come to expect this, it is normal now. Notification in the room that this is a hybrid meeting with both video and audio, those who do not wish to participate in that format should decline if called, refrain from capturing or recording as you would in an in person meeting etc. For the folks online there are notifications and protocols that have been developed, tested and evolved by supports such as Tech 12, the protocols we had for north south connection should work here.

Interpretation: In considering interpretation, we typically have the sessions in-person at International Conventions in English. There are other live sessions for additional languages. What we can propose is that with a virtual session we would ensure that we offered interpretation into our primary languages, French and Spanish for participants as well as other languages of registrants via an interpretation product, such as Wordly, for example.

Capacity – we would need to know what our capability is, consider how to address that. Limit registration to what we can handle. We can accompany that with info that this is the first time at an international, what we experience and learn will inform future events, that in person attendees also experience the challenge of rooms’ meeting capacity etc.

Methods of registration – Initially we thought that this “product” would be available as part of a package with the 3-Big-meeting product but now don’t think it will be the same audience/participants and needs to be a stand-alone option.

Registration fee – through the main registration process. If registration is limited by capacity, and costs are known, it would be easy to set a break-even price. As this has turned into a virtual session track the final registration prices will ultimately be the decision of trustees’ IC-RF Committee to determine. The budget for the 2025 International Convention will need to be revised to include new expenses that would be supported by the attendees of the event as normal.

The committee was provided two vendor estimates which include a scaled down and scaled up version of the event.

The scaled-down version would be one 90-minute session on Friday and another on Saturday.

The scaled-up version would be four 90-minute sessions on Friday and Saturday, or twelve hours of content that virtual attendees could enjoy.

Also reviewed was an estimated concept explaining the different options which provide technical information regarding the potential hybrid portion of this event.

Committee discussed:

1. Is the committee on board with the concept of having a two-day 8 session virtual track for people who are unable to attend the 2025 International Convention in person?

a. Yes.

The discussion estimated the virtual sessions to cost an estimated \$85,000 to complete. The cost would be self-supported via the members who registered to participate in the virtual session track.

A final registration fee will be determined to cover the cost of production.

The trustees' IC-RF Committee will also be reaching out via our trustees-at-large to ask about this offering and what international members think of this new concept. This sharing will be received and documented by the Staff Secretary to the Committee.

As this is a new virtual session track offering for an International Convention, the trustees' IC-RF Committee shared this information with the Conference Committee on IC-RF for review and consideration. In the past similar products, such as the anonymity-protected photograph of the flag ceremony, have been forwarded in this way for committee review.

Background:

1. Tech 12 International Convention Hybrid Review

**2025 International Convention in Vancouver
Preliminary Hybrid Review
February 7, 2024**

**IC-RF
Item C
Doc.1**

A vendor is looking forward to potentially partnering with you on this endeavor. Please note that the two attached proposals are preliminary pricing and further definition of scope and scale will be required to develop detailed plans for the event. These quotes should be seen as starting points for discussion rather than final numbers.

After reading the background material and researching options, we see two ways to proceed: a scaled-back hybrid version with a smaller budget and reduced capability, and a full hybrid version that will necessarily be more expensive but have more opportunities for interaction and branding. Based upon needs, scale and scope options could be explored to fit budgetary needs and project vision.

Platform

Due to the scale of the event, streaming platform requirements need to be considered.

Zoom is a familiar option for many A.A. members. Zoom webinar is a specialized platform on Zoom video conferencing software designed for hosting webinars, online seminars, virtual workshops, and large-scale events. It offers a comprehensive set of tools tailored to the specific needs of organizing and conducting large scale online events.

Here are some key benefits of using Zoom webinar:

Scalability: Zoom Webinar is able to accommodate large audiences. We have pricing below for up to 50,000 attendees. Our Zoom Representative mentioned that they could easily accommodate larger audiences, but they required event details beyond what we were prepared to share at the time.

Ease of use: Many of the conference attendees are familiar and comfortable participating in online meetings via Zoom and the barrier to entry will be minimized by not introducing new platforms & tools.

Accessibility: For accessibility purposes, language and ASL interpretation would take place within the same Zoom Webinar. Participants may also dial in via phone to listen in areas of limited internet availability.

Zoom Webinar Pricing:

- 10k attendees \$6490

CONFIDENTIAL: 74th General Service Conference Background

- 20k attendees \$7650
- 30k attendees \$9754
- 50k attendees \$14631

Here are some key benefits of Vimeo:

Vimeo allows for an embedded stream on AA.org or other designated sites, with paywall/password protection available. Chat and Q&A features are available as well. Vimeo allows for higher resolution streaming than Zoom, which increases the attendee experience.

Vimeo streaming would not allow for phone-in attendees, and interpretation would need to take place on separate streams/links due to the platform capabilities. As each language will need a separate livestream, additional equipment will be required when choosing Vimeo.

We are continuing to research Vimeo pricing and features. We will follow up with more information as available.

There are also other alternative streaming options beyond Vimeo and Zoom, including but not limited to Whova, Introvoke, QUMU Cloud, Kaltura, etc... Once the scope of the project is more clearly determined, we can research options that may better fit the needs of the event.

Scaled back version.

The scaled back version of a panel will include in-person and virtual panelists and allow for some two-way communication between attendees in the room and online. These would be the limitations:

- Limited number of virtual panelists.
- 2-way communication for panelists only—attendees cannot interact with each other or in-person attendees.
- 3 Language interpretation (English, Spanish, French), plus ASL.
- Virtual Attendees will be able to 'View Only' a Zoom Webinar or Live Stream.

Full Hybrid version

To create a broader hybrid option, we can explore many services not included in the scaled-back proposal such as custom-created content and methods for developing an engaging virtual experience for attendees. This would bring an enjoyable, engaging viewing experience to the attendees. This full-hybrid version will include the following:

- 2-way communication between attendees and panelists, method TBD—chat or voice pending further discussion.
- Potential for discussion and sharing from a wider variety of convention attendees.
- Custom built video and graphics content to further the experience of virtual attendees.
- Additional language interpretation beyond English, Spanish, French, and ASL if desired (additional costs will apply).

Equipment and Staffing needs

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We will need the following equipment provided by local AV vendors. This list is a starting point of equipment categories and not an exhaustive list. This list should be viewed as minimum requirements:

- Video Wall or Large Screens and Projectors
- 4 Robotic PTZ Cameras with controllers
- Tricaster TC2 - Elite video switcher
- LU-800 Bonded Cellular Internet backup device
- Large sound system appropriate for the space
- Lighting equipment sufficient for video
- Pipe and Drape and room decor
- High Speed Internet Access - Minimum 40 Mbps Up/Down - All services will be contingent on internet access.

The following technical positions will need to be hired locally:

- Audio crew
- Projections or LED Wall Technicians/ Operators
- Lighting crew
- Camera operators
- General Audio-Visual Technicians
- All other necessary labor