

Understanding the Area 57 Budget Process (March 25, 2014)

The Area 57 Policy and Procedures Manual sets out the process we use to set the annual budget for the Area. That process begins in May of each year, and runs until the September Area Assembly -- where the new budget is set for the following year.

Groups and individuals contribute money to the Area throughout the year to help carry the message. The budget process is designed to allow the groups to determine how the Area's money will be spent and to provide assurance that it is being used wisely. The process allows time for consideration, prayer, and consultation with the groups as to how much the groups are willing to contribute, and how it is to be used in carrying the message.

The budgetary year (fiscal year) for Area 57 runs from September 1 until August 31. Thus the budget we develop between May and September of this year will be for the year September 1, 2014 to August 31, 2015. It will be referred to as the "2014-15 Budget".

Here is how it works:

In May:

The Area Treasurer prepares a Budget Worksheet showing last year's budget and actual expenditures to date. That worksheet is the starting point for the budget. This is sent to a Budget Committee consisting of the Area Officers, Service Committee Chairs, and District Chairs.

The Budget Committee members give consideration to what the new budget might include.

- Area Service Committee Chairs discuss & consider with their committees how much might be needed to carry the message in their respective areas and develop a "plan" for the upcoming year for their committee.
- The Area Chair and Secretary consider how much might be needed for office expense, newsletters, etc.
- The District Chairs discuss with their Districts the budget process and bring their District's thoughts and suggestions to the process.

Prior to the June Area Committee Meeting:

The Budget Committee meets before the June Area Committee Meeting. Using the Budget worksheet as a starting point, they adjust the numbers from last year's budget based on their experience and input. The result is the "**First draft of the Proposed Budget.**" (sometimes referred to as the "**Preliminary Proposed Budget**")

Then during the June Area Committee Meeting, the voting Area Committee (the DCMs & bona fide subs) reviews that draft, and modifies it as their group conscience decides. Note: At the June Area Committee Meeting - all present participate in the discussions, so that input comes from anyone in the Fellowship, but only the DCMs vote at this time. The result is the "**Proposed Budget**" for the following year that is taken to the groups for their review.

From June to September:

The GSRs and DCMs take the **Proposed Budget** back to their groups to be considered and for their input. It is a dual question—to consider both how much the groups are willing to contribute, and how that money should be spent.

In September:

At the Area Assembly, the GSRs and Alternate GSRs determine the final budget. Using the **Proposed Budget** as a starting point, they discuss, add, subtract, change it, as per their group conscience, to arrive at the "**Final Annual Budget**" for the following year.

Please note that it does not end here. Throughout the year, the budget is monitored. There will of course be unexpected expenses and opportunities; and contributions will be more or less than estimated. Thank you for participating in this budget process!