Westside Central Office's Response to District 18 Hotline Request

April 10, 2015

Introduction

Jack B, the DCM of District 18 (Columbia County), visited WCO's business meeting on March 2, 2015. He presented the idea that Westside Central Office (WCO) provides hotline services for Columbia County. District 18 currently has a hotline phone number and a committee of hotline volunteers. However, Jack indicated that there is concern over aging computer hardware that routes hotline calls to volunteers' telephones. Rather than replace the old hardware, Jack suggests that District 18 piggyback onto WCO's hotline service.

The WCO I.T. Committee discussed Jack's proposal during the month of March and presented a recommendation at the April 6, 2015 WCO business meeting. With the blessing of the WCO voting members, the WCO I.T. Committee has prepared the following response to Jack's District 18 Hotline proposal.

Possible Solutions

Below is a summary of possible solutions for District 18:

1. District 18 use a web based phone service like www.freedomvoice.com for their hotline (i.e., District 18 keeps their existing phone number but uses a web based service instead of the aging computer hardware).
2. WCO Hotline Volunteers fields District 18/Columbia County Hotline Calls (i.e., District 18 switches their Hotline phone number to WCO's Hotline phone number and retires the old computer equipment).
3. Take no action.

WCO's hotline uses a web-based service called www.freedomvoice.com. The web service forwards calls to volunteers' telephones. We pay $9.95+tax per month for 300 minutes per month (and 4.9 cents for each additional minute). As of this writing, WCO has not exceeded 300 minutes per month because hotline volunteers will typically arrange for a 12th Step Call[1] when an individual wishes to talk at length about recovery from alcoholism. 12th Step Calls are coordinated by our 12th Step Call Committee and they generally involve a 12th Step volunteer contacting the individual by phone or in person.

Since District 18's main concern is their aging hardware, it may be to their advantage to consider option 1. By going with option 1, District 18 can keep their existing phone number, have complete control over their system, and retire the old computer hardware. They may also save money if they only require 300 minutes per month. If District 18 would like to use www.freedomvoice.com, the WCO I.T. Chair is available to provide guidance in setting up the service.

[1] More information on 12th Step Calls is available at www.westsidecentraloffice.com/service/twelfth-step-calls.

If District 18 would like WCO to act on option 2, then additional consideration is required between WCO and District 18. Below is a list of questions that came up when WCO discussed this option at its April 6, 2015 business meeting:

1. In the last year, how many calls per day on average did the District 18 Hotline receive?
2. Does District 18 publish a regular meeting schedule?
3. How does District 18 field 12th Step Calls?

Question 1 is of concern since it will determine if WCO needs to upgrade their level of telephone service to field the additional calls for District 18. The next level of service is 1000 minutes a month, $24.95+tax per month (and 4.5 cents for each additional minute).

Question 2 addresses the need for WCO to provide accurate meeting information to hotline callers. If District 18 publishes a meeting schedule, then WCO asks that District 18 emails it to the I.T. Chair whenever it is updated. District 18 can email the I.T. Chair at it@westsidecentraloffice.com. If no meeting schedule is published, then individual groups can update their meeting information with WCO by visiting www.westsidecentraloffice.com/meetings/addupdate-meeting-information.

Question 3 addresses the need for 12th Step coordination between WCO Hotline Volunteers and District 18. If District 18 already has a list of 12th Step Call Volunteers, then sharing that list with WCO could satisfy the need. WCO Hotline Volunteers are not required to field 12th Step Calls. Instead, they arrange for a 12th Step volunteer to contact the individual making the request. In order to effectively handle these types of calls for Columbia County, WCO would need the contact information of at least one individual in Columbia County that can field/farm out 12th Step Call requests.

The WCO Hotline can forward calls to any U.S. domestic land-line or cell phone. Therefore, existing (as well as new) District 18 Hotline Volunteers are welcome to participate with the WCO Hotline. They can learn more and sign up for shifts by visiting www.westsidecentraloffice.com/service/a-a-hotline.

Conclusion

If District 18 chooses option 1 or 3 in the *Possible Solutions* section above, no further action by WCO is required. If District 18 is interested in option 2, then WCO requests answers to the 3 questions mentioned in the previous section. Based on the answers to these questions, WCO will consider the request and send back a response to District 18 for further review. Because A.A. hotlines affect other groups and A.A. as a whole, option 2 will require approval by the voting members of both District 18 and WCO.

Jack B (mothersparks@gmail.com), the DCM of District 18, will act as the point of contact for District 18. Mark L (it@westsidecentraloffice.com), the I.T. Chair of WCO, will act as the point of contact for WCO.