

P61 Area Meetings Task Force Report  
Final Report  
January 18, 2023

**Task Force Topic:** Determine if making all future area meetings Hybrid (face to face with zoom option) is a viable option for Area 9 business meetings in Panel 64 and beyond.

**Task Force Members:** Chair: Katy M. (DR1), Bob C. (Technology Coordinator), Gretchen S. (Alt Delegate), Pat E. (DR6), Carmen (DR8)

**Background/Historical Info:** Use experience, current realities, and historical work as background. See Thought Force report for the historical background.

It was recommended from the thought force final report to assign a task force to the question and see more avenues to have Business meetings, than conventional hotel face to face meetings.

**Task Force Findings:**

- 1) Our current contract with the Hilton Altamonte Springs covers area meetings in 2023 & 2024. Carmen talked to Linda K., the Area 9 hotel contract negotiator, to get her insight about adding hybrid meetings to the existing contracts. Linda said that the way our contracts are right now we are required to book a certain number of rooms. If we don't have enough rooms booked for an event, the Area must pay penalties to the hotel. If we want to have hybrid Zoom meetings at the hotel, we will need to negotiate a new contract with a different structure to accommodate fewer booked rooms. It is possible to rent the meeting rooms instead of getting them free based on the number of rooms booked. It is also possible that equipment might be rented. Carmen reached out to the hotel and discovered that the Hilton Altamonte Springs can accommodate hybrid zoom meetings with their equipment. They have a minimum daily charge. They also have a daily charge if we use an outside vendor. Elsa talked to the Hilton and was told our AV contract would increase by \$2400 per day if we had hybrid meetings run by the hotel and/or their subcontractors. The current AV contract is approximately \$2000 per Assembly/AWSC.
- 2) The recent Southeast Regional Delegate Get Together (SERDGT) made use of the hybrid format. Gretchen was part of this event as a Zoom participant. She asked Lisa P. and Evelyn T., who both attended the event in person and were on the Task Force to make the hybrid meeting work, to speak with our Task Force about their experience. They had to invent the process from scratch as this format had never been used at the SERDGT before. They discovered that the cost to rent equipment from the hotel in Puerto Rico was \$10,000. They decided to use and carry personal equipment to this event.

As a Zoom participant, Gretchen had a wonderful experience. She didn't feel as connected to the other attendees as she might have had she been there in person. However, she was not able to travel to Puerto Rico to attend in person.

Lisa's experience was frustrating and challenging. Her personal equipment, that she carried onto the plane when she travelled, weighed 50 pounds. There was no security in the meeting room, so each time the meeting adjourned she needed to take the equipment to her hotel room. She said she would not do that again.

Evelyn's experience was very positive. She loves technology and believes this is the future of AI-Anon meetings. She couldn't participate like normal, but she still loved it.

**Things Lisa would do differently:**

- Equipment should be owned by the Area or rented. It is best not to use member's personal equipment.
- Wi-Fi needs to be available and reliable.
- Roles of Zoom helpers needs to be well defined.

**Suggested Equipment:**

- A good computer
- A good camera
- USB cords of ample length
- Speakers
- Microphones
- HDMI cords
- Screen

- 3) We received a bid from American Audio Visual of \$6456.40 to facilitate hybrid Zoom meetings at the Hilton Altamonte Springs.
- 4) Equipment costs were hard to track down. If we purchase and use our own equipment, the hotel will charge us for bringing in outside equipment. That would also happen if we used an outside technology company to provide us with the equipment and expertise of managing a hybrid meeting over Zoom. Today's costs are likely not to be the costs in 2025. Equipment changes and it is not possible to know what those costs would be in two years.
- 5) We looked into platforms other than Zoom to see if the Area could cancel the Zoom account. Google Meets was one option, but there are several reasons it would not work as well as Zoom:
  - No easy way to rename yourself.
  - No private chat option except for the host.

There were some positive aspects of Google Meets. However, the Task Force didn't think they outweighed the limitations:

- Closed caption option.
- Option to save poll results.

- 6) We looked at Assembly Attendance since 2018. This information was interesting though it doesn't give us complete information about why people attend or don't attend Assembly. Another thing to consider is that a new panel began in 2021.

Date	Number Attending	Face-to-Face or Zoom
May 2018	220	Face-to-Face
Oct 2018	174	Face-to-Face
June 2019	220	Face-to-Face
July 2020	171	Zoom
Oct 2020	175	Zoom
June 2021	148	Zoom
Oct 2021	126	Zoom
June 2022	148	Face-to-Face

**Task Force Recommendation:** The Task Force considered the best approach for Area 9 based on the cost, ease of use, and the Area's needs. We came up with the following options:

1. Not move forward with hybrid meetings:  
No further action required.
2. Negotiate contracts with the Hilton for 2025 and beyond:  
Linda would know that Area 9 intends to include a hybrid option to area meetings and would use that information to get the best contract possible. That could include paying more for rooms, meals, and AV.
3. Change to a non-hotel location in 2025 and beyond:  
This option would require finding a meeting venue that could accommodate the area. Meals could be catered, or it could be the individual responsibility of the attending members to find their own meals. Those members who need hotel rooms could be responsible to find their own lodging.
4. Do a trial with the current contracts at the Hilton:  
There could be penalties for not meeting our contractual room block obligations if there are fewer people attending in person. The hotel AV expenses would increase.

Respectfully submitted by,  
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