

Findings of the Area 54 Investigation on Finances

Presented at the Area 54 Assembly on July 19, 2026

After our treasurer resigned on April 19, 2026, Wellington R., Alternate Delegate and our immediate past treasurer, became acting treasurer. The panel conducted an internal investigation regarding discrepancies found on our bank statements.

The General Service Office and our East Central Region trustee were consulted for guidance. They told us Area 54 is autonomous, and our decisions and actions must be decided in consideration of the 12 Traditions and the 12 Concepts.

That means we need to balance our AA responsibilities along with our legal responsibilities. In Ohio, nonprofit leaders and board members have a fiduciary duty to address and report suspected fraud. Those who recklessly ignore internal embezzlement or charitable fraud risk personal liability and jeopardize the organization's legal standing.

Numerous discrepancies were discovered. We estimate our financial losses at approximately \$20,000 but the exact amount and manner of the loss is under investigation by the Canton Police Department and Citizens Bank's fraud unit. We will share more information with you as the investigations unfold.

7 Things We've Done

1. On the advice of Citizens Bank, we closed the Checking, Savings and Mini-Conference accounts and transferred the money to three new accounts to ensure our money isn't frozen during the investigations. Our money is safe, and so are your contributions.
2. The Area 54 guidelines suggest that the treasurer be bonded. However, Area 54 has never bonded a treasurer. We will make a motion at the July 19 Assembly to change the Guidelines to read that the treasurer **must** be bonded. Bonding is a type of insurance contract, paid by Area 54, that protects our funds and guarantees financial reimbursement if the treasurer misappropriates money through theft, embezzlement or fraud. We will also make a motion to remove wording that says our Guidelines are "suggested."
3. The Aug. 23 General Service Workshop & Potluck will be devoted to discussing the 7th tradition, and a mini-inventory of what we have learned from these financial problems. We will also hear comments, answer questions from the body about our financial situation, and hear others' ideas for moving forward.
4. We are cancelling all remaining mailings this year to save money. The newsletter and flyers will be sent digitally. Members are asked to make sure their emails are up to date.
5. This year, because of our financial condition, we will suspend the \$150 stipend for our 16 committee chairs for the upcoming Ohio State Convention. Also this year, panelists will pay for their own meals instead of being reimbursed by Area 54 as we have been in the past.
6. We're using incomplete records to send thank-you letters to individuals and groups that contributed during 2026. We will present a group contributions list, based on the information we

have, in the months ahead. If you have questions about a specific contribution, contact Wellington or Joan S., Recording Secretary.

7. The panel and some of the past delegates already have discussed a variety of ways to strengthen our procedures and follow other recommended practices to prevent theft and misappropriation of funds.

What Happens Next

At the General Service Workshop on August 23, we will share the steps already under way and the ideas we've been developing, and we look forward to hearing your thoughts as well.

We will continue to provide updates as we receive them from the police and the bank, so everyone stays fully informed.

Despite our financial problems, **Area 54 must survive**. More than ever, we rely on your contributions to help us carry the message and pay the bills such as rent for the 12-Step Club, literature, printing and postage, etc. We are moving forward with care, transparency and determination—and we will get through this together.

Our fellowship has weathered challenges before, and each time we have emerged stronger. With your support, we will continue moving forward—one thoughtful step at a time—guided by hope, trust, and our shared commitment to carrying the message to those who still suffer.

In service,

Beverly F., Delegate

Wellington R, Alternate Delegate

DeVona S., Area Chair

Joan S., Recording Secretary

Val D., Mailing Secretary

Tina C., Registrar