

## OA Region 5

### Video Conference Ad-Hoc Committee Report

2019-01-27

After the 2018 Fall Region 5 Assembly, the Video Conference Ad-Hoc committee got to work to explore and make a recommendation on a video conference service for Region 5.

We decided that our goal was simple to answer the following questions by the 2019 Spring Region 5 Assembly:

- Do we really need video conference capabilities?
- How could we use a video conference service to our benefit?
- Which video conference service is the best service for us considering capabilities and cost?
- What are our next steps, if any?

We further broke down these questions to many sub questions. We then did our best to answer these questions and generated a 12 page document. If you want to read this document let me know.

In summary, this is what we agreed on:

In good conscious, we cannot say that we need video conferencing. We can survive perfectly well without it. However, the benefits of using video conferencing outweigh not using it. The cost is really not a lot and can be considered a prudent and worthwhile expenditure of our money. The list of benefits covered multiple pages and really the thing that would stop us is our own fear to start using something new. The only really big issue we had with video conference service was how we would use it, rather than should we use it. There was a fear that given the expense of attending Assemblies that it could over time reduce attendance rather than enhance our meetings. As such we realized that for now we should limit the use of the video conference service to committee meetings, the summer conference call, and any intergroup that would want to take advantage of the capabilities of video conferencing. Using video conferencing during assemblies opened up too many questions on how we would use it and how we might adapt to allow video conference users to participate in the assembly. There were questions on how we would allow voting, participating in debate and asking questions. We decided this was too much to deal with at this time and instead agreed to table this discussion for a later date.

We looked at multiple video conference services including ezTalks which was demonstrated at the last fall assembly. Once we took a look at a competing service "Zoom Cloud Conferencing", we realized that there was no doubt that Zoom was far superior to all of the other services available. Most were just too expensive. Zoom was a bit more expensive than ezTalks, but the quality of the video stream and additional functionality it offered was much better than ezTalk. We recommend Zoom to the Region 5 Executive Board, who choose to subscribe to Zoom for 1 year. The cost for Zoom Cloud Conferencing for 1 year is \$149.90. If at the end of the year we realized that we hardly used the service then we could always cancel.

In many ways all of the video conferencing services we looked at had similar capabilities. They all had the ability to share screens, documents, white boards, and polls. They had some capacity to record the

session. They all had the ability have chatting / messaging during sessions and offline. Zoom had three very exciting capabilities that none of the moderately priced services had: primary focus, alternate hosting, and break out rooms. These features were what sold us on using Zoom over the other services.

With primary focus, whoever is talking gets the primary focus. All other participants are reduced to thumbnails. The main speaker is presented in the center of the screen.

Alternate hosting would allow the Region 5 Host to schedule a meeting with someone else being the meeting host. This way the R5 Host would not need to be present at the meeting and the meeting host would have all of the capabilities to manage the meeting. Recently we discovered this feature was only available for paying users. Since all of our OA members are considered basic/non-paying users of Zoom, we cannot take advantage of this feature. However, after reaching out to Zoom, they provided us with an alternate method of doing the very same thing. We can designate a person to be the host and then that individual after connecting to the meeting, can claim the right to be the meeting host. A little more convoluted but basically the same.

Break out rooms are sub-rooms in the primary meeting room. None of the other services we looked at had this capabilities. So let's say we want to add Committee meetings to our Summer Conference Call. We start the summer conference call session as normal with everybody in one meeting room and then when it's time to do committee meetings, The R5 Host would assign each of the people into separate break-out rooms. For example the R5 Host could put all of the Bylaws committee members into a specific break-out room. Then when the time comes to start committee meetings the R5 Host would open the room (by clicking a button) and each of the Bylaws committee members would move from the main meeting room into their own separate meeting room. None of the other participants in the main meeting room or the other break out rooms could see or hear what is going on with the Bylaws committee. There is also no limit to number of breakout rooms we could generate.

The number one benefit besides seeing each other was sharing screens and documents. As we get used to using this collaboration capability, we will become more effective and get more work done. Our committees will benefit from this most of all. We can give workshops, sharing a presentation. The opportunities to share recovery is expands greatly when we use this tool. Our intergroups also can benefit from being able to include those remote groups during their meetings.

The only real limitation we have with zoom is that we are not paying to have multiple concurrent meetings. We can only ever have one meeting at a time. This means two committee who want to have a meeting on the same day and same hour will have to fight with swords and cannons for the meeting time. No, actually this is just a scheduling issue and honestly if this is the worst thing we have to deal with then we are in a pretty good place.

Using Zoom for our Summer Conference opens up a big opportunity to expand our summer get together. I have heard from many people a regret that we gave up our Summer Assembly or at least a wish we could have committee meetings during the summer session. Well, with Zoom, we now have that capability. As such the Ad-Hoc committee has submitted a motion to add committee meetings to the Summer Conference Call. This motion is an opportunity to discuss if this is something we want to do.

You might be wondering what the agenda for the summer session would look like. Currently, we reserve two hours for reports and intergroup sharing. Adding in committee meetings, would stretch the schedule out a bit, considering how many committees we have. One suggested agenda might look like:

<b>Time (Central)</b>	<b>Event</b>
8:00 am – 9:15 am	General Assembly: Welcome, Approval of the Agenda, Roll Call, Executive committee reports, Region 5 WSBC Delegate report, Minutes approval committee and Announcement's
9:30 am-12:00 pm	Break-out rooms – Business Committee Meetings
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	General Assembly: Reconvene , Roll Call, Report of the Minutes Approval Committee of the Spring Assembly
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Break-out rooms – Outreach committee of the Whole – Sub-committee meetings.
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Committee Reports and intergroup share and then adjourning

We agree this would make for a very long day, however this would go a long way to getting things done at region. We don't know if this would work, as we think, however unless we try we will never know.

One thing is for sure, the next year will be a year of experimentation and experience. As we use Zoom, we will find something work better than other things. At the 2019 Fall Conference we need to decide if having the Video Conference Service made thing better. If the answer is yes then the next question is do we want to expand its use into Assemblies. What would that look like? There are a lot of questions that need to be answer when it comes to Assemblies. Remote Attendance would be good, be we thing we would need to be very careful how to implement it. We don't believe we are ready today to make that leap, but next December we might change our mind. There is no rush, and who knows what the future will bring us. So the next step is to do exactly what we are doing. Use Zoom for our conference meetings, Summer Conference Call, and Intergroup meetings. Then at the Fall Assembly we can consider reforming the Video Conference Ad-Hoc committee to discuss Remote Attendance.

Thank You for letting us provide this service for our Region.

--The Region 5 Video Conference Ad-Hoc Committee.

Members:

- Joel I.
- Keri E.
- Eileen C.
- Deanna B.