

DRAFT

Minutes for Annual Membership Meeting – September 21, 2005 Natick High School

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:00 pm by the president, Mark McNeil.

The meeting began with a period for open comments prior to elections. Many members spoke about the importance of outreach and education within the MFL. Debbie Simon and Mark McNeil spoke about the importance of coaches and students being welcoming, in particular to newer programs. They affirmed the importance of openness and communication within the league. Lynne Coyne noted a need to unify speech and debate. Beena Koshy and Sarah Donnelly discussed the value of the Coaches Convention, specifically the importance of bringing in folks from outside the MFL to bring fresh ideas and perspectives in order to enhance the learning experiences for both students and coaches. Rob Croteau asked if the league might consider offering more tournaments with both speech and debate events so that programs with small staffs could enter in both areas more easily.

Marc Rischitelli (NFL District Chair for New England) announced that he received a questionnaire from the NFL asking if coaches would be interested in an NFL regional workshop if one were available. He asked if the MFL would be interested in attending such an event if the dates and times worked out.

Debbie Simon announced that the DVDs from last spring's State Finals have been finished and are in the process of being copied. They should be available soon. (They include both speech and debate events.)

We then moved on to elections.

PRESIDENT:

Will Crocker nominated Chris Palmer (Newton South HS)

Joyce Albert nominated Mark McNeil (Sacred Heart HS)

After the candidates each spoke for a few minutes, there was a secret ballot vote.

Chris Palmer was declared the new president of the MFL.

Chris took over the meeting and continued with the other offices.

VP/SECRETARY:

Debbie Simon nominated Lisa Honeyman (Newton South HS)

There were no other nominations for this office, so the president declared Lisa Honeyman the next VP/Secretary of the MFL.

TREASURER:

Judy Crocker nominated Rob Croteau (Catholic Memorial HS).

There were no other nominations for this office, so the president declared Rob Croteau the next Treasurer of the MFL.

CHAIR of DEBATE:

Dan Jewett nominated PJ Wexler (Needham HS), but PJ declined the nomination.

PJ Wexler nominated Lynne Coyne (Lexington HS).

There were no other nominations for this office, so the president declared Lynne Coyne the next Chair of Debate.

CHAIR of SPEECH:

Mark McNeil nominated Joyce Albert (Natick HS).

There were no other nominations for this office, so the president declared Joyce Albert the next Chair of Speech.

CHAIR of CONGRESS:

Lisa Honeyman nominated PJ Wexler (Needham HS).

There were no other nominations for this office, so the president declared PJ Wexler the next Chair of Congress.

OLD BUSINESS

Judy Crocker gave the treasurer's report. She distributed copies of the current bank balance. The MFL had \$553.63 in savings and \$476.48 in checking as of 9/21/05. She proposed that the MFL close its savings account and transfer the \$553.63 into checking.

Judy also pointed out that the MFL is entering the next season with in a difficult financial position. In order to complete the process of applying for 501c(3) status, it will cost \$500 for the application and filing fees. There will be additional expenses in the form of back taxes and penalties that will arise once we apply for non-profit status and file the back taxes. Judy volunteered to work with the new treasurer to complete the 501c(3) filing process.

Expenses have surpassed income by about \$2000 each year for the past two years. Major expenses have included the Coaches' Conventions, trophies for State Finals and the DVD tapings. Judy said that, while the coaches conventions have been valuable, the MFL cannot continue to finance them the way we have in the past. We need to think of other ways to raise money. She suggested a few possibilities: Raise MFL dues; raise fees for State Finals to cover the costs of the trophies; make DVDs every other year rather than every year; charge for the coaches convention; seek outside funding once we become a non-profit.

Rob Croteau suggested we might charge a special assessment to all teams to cover the costs of completing the 501c(3) filing process.

Greg Cunningham made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. It was approved unanimously by the membership.

A brief discussion about fundraising options followed.

EXPLANATION OF WHY RULES DOCUMENT VOTE POSPTONED

Lisa Honeyman explained why the date to approve the proposed Rules document had been changed to October 22. The MMSFL (Massachusetts Middle School Forensic League) needed more time to work out the language in the MFL Rules as it pertains to them. The Rules committee re-opened the comment period until September 23 in order to give them an opportunity to do that. There was discussion about the middle school league and its connection to the MFL. Some advocated keeping language

acknowledging the affiliation of the MFL and MMSFL. Others advocated eliminating all reference to the MMSFL from the Rules document. Sue Wurster (chair of the MMSFL) was not present for the discussion. Mark McNeil offered to continue to be a liaison to Sue. He suggested that we write some generic language recognizing the connection between the MFL and MMSFL. Lisa Honeyman will draft general language and send it to the Rules committee. Once it is reviewed, it will be sent on to Mark McNeil to share with Sue. This will be done by Friday, September 23 so that modifications can be made and the document can be sent to the membership on the 24th, giving 4 weeks notice before the October 22, 2005 meeting.

VOTE TO APPROVE PROPOSED MFL CONSTITUTION

The constitution committee, consisting of Joyce Albert, Chris Palmer and Lisa Honeyman (Chair) , presented the document for a vote. Chris noted that the same lawyer that has been working with the MFL as it has incorporated, approved of the language in the document. The lawyer suggested some additions may be warranted, but they can be added by the Board later. The Constitution passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF 2005/2006 CALENDAR

There is a question about whether or not the New Leadership debate tournament will run. Sacred Heart is moving the debate portion of its tournament from February 11 to February 25. The proposed calendar was approved unanimously by the membership. Chris Palmer noted that on the web site the debate events were not listed at debate tournaments because he did not know which schools planned to offer which events. He asked debate schools to please get in touch with him or the Debate Chair (Lynne Coyne) to supply the information.

NEW BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion about when during the year to hold elections in the next cycle. We have always held elections in the fall in the past. Greg Cunningham proposed that we consider moving them to the spring, perhaps at States. We will discuss this more thoroughly at a future meeting, such as the Hall of Fame tournament meeting.

Mark Rischitelli introduced a request that the Board reexamine the rules for State qualification in Multiple. Last year teams of students qualified for multiple and no substitutions were allowed at States. Many coaches spoke about the difficulties of this requirement. A straw vote revealed unanimous support for a modification of the rules for this event. The Board will discuss the issue at a future meeting.

Dan Jewett asked if fees were waved for new schools in order to encourage their participation. Judy Crocker replied that they are not. A few suggestions for how to encourage more participation were given, including waiving judge requirements or having new schools bring judges to be trained, rather than to actually judge. There was an acknowledgement that such a gesture may be very helpful to the new schools, but that we need to balance their needs with the needs of the tournament director to run the tournament with enough judges. We must leave this sort of decision to the individual tournament directors.

Chris Palmer announced that there are still 6 Board positions to fill. If anyone is interested in an At-Large position, he/she should e-mail the Board with a statement (generic or specific). The Board will consider all requests. One position that must be filled is the liaison to the Middle Schools.

Sarah Donnelly distributed pre-Holly information sheets, including the title of the Group Discussion book for this year ("The Pact" by Drs. Sampson Davis, George Jenkins and Rameck Hunt) and a general outline of a new event they hope to offer.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Honeyman

VP/Secretary