

MFL Board Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by the president, Debbie Simon.

Present: Dan Sapir (Sacred Heart), Chris Sheldon (Bancroft Academy), Jim Murphy (Weston), Lisa Honeyman (Newton South), Debbie Simon (Milton Academy), Sarah Donnelly (Natick), Greg Cunningham (Catholic Memorial), Rob Croteau (Catholic Memorial), Paul J. Wexler (Needham), Josh Cohen (Newton South).

1. Officially announce the new Debate Chair: Jim Murphy
The board would like to extend a special thank you & good luck to Bill Cooper
2. Decide **specific job** descriptions for our Representatives at Large:

Josh Cohen - NSHS

Josh will focus on PFD in the MFL to improve how smoothly we run the tournaments in order to get more rounds in at tournaments, if possible. He would like to develop documentation for TRPC so that more people can help with tabulation, which, in turn, will help run the tournaments more smoothly. Sarah Donnelly has offered to continue being involved with PFD at speech tournaments and work with Josh towards his stated goals.

Greg Cunningham - Catholic Memorial

Greg will continue as "Group Guru", assisting tournaments with writing prompts for Group Discussion (along with Mark Fellowes (Revere)).

Sarah Donnelly - Natick (Discuss the Lisa/Sarah plan).

Lisa & Sarah are sharing the Vice President/Secretary job. Lisa will hold the official title, and will handle meeting minutes. Sarah and she will work together on the other things. Sarah will also continue helping with impromptu topics if needed. She would like help. (Maybe a google.doc would be helpful.)

Bob Hutchings - Pike/Phillips Andover

Bob wants to be the liaison to the middle school league. The rules differ in the two leagues and he can help them ease their students into the high school programs.

Dan Sapir - Sacred Heart

Dan will work with Sarah to find a tournament location for States. We would like to host both speech & debate States at the same site if possible. Need to keep the price tag manageable. Dan would also like to continue helping out with ballot sorting at tournaments.

Chris Sheldon - Bancroft

Chris has offered to serve as a liaison for new programs – how to get them into the league, who to talk to, what to do at tournaments etc.

3. Update from Rob on League non-profit status (present plan for completion of the process).

Debbie thanked Lisa for her work on the 501(c)3 status prior to this point. Lisa passed it on to Rob in July. Rob is currently working to fill in the paper work. He discussed the difference between being a 501(c)3 entity and a non-profit organization. We will have to file paperwork with the IRS each year. Rob is going to meet with a lawyer to find out what we need to do to complete the process. His goal is to have the paperwork up to date by the end of the year so going forward the treasurer can simply file the paperwork each year afterwards.

4. Tim Dodd (St. John's) has offered to help the MFL Board.

Tim would like to be involved with debate. Although we don't have a position on the board available, we would love to have his help if he is interested. Jim Murphy will contact him about how to be involved.

5. Set goals for the board for the next 2 years

Rob: Complete 501(c)3 process.

Greg: Get more coaches to attend the MFL Annual League meeting. Moving the all school meeting from the fall to the spring several years ago has dampened attendance. In the fall it's time to "kick-off" the new season. In the spring, everyone is exhausted or too busy to attend. Greg will look into what is involved in getting the meeting moved. Constitutional amendment?

We talked about this for a while.

General: Outreach. We want to be more welcoming to new programs.

Jim: Outreach to the BDL. The Boston Debate League is a dynamic organization. We should be working more closely with this group. In 5 years they have made great strides. Something like ½ of all students in Massachusetts who do debate are in the BDL. Jim will reach out and have a conversation with them to find out how we can come together. (Sarah pointed out that many of the BDL schools came to MFL States this year.)

Chris: Make a DVD of State Champions. Maybe make it promotional in addition to educational.

Dan: Create a brochure to represent the MFL and what we do. Recruit more actively.

6. Finalize Schedule for the MFL Speech and Debate Season as much as possible.

All current dates online are accurate.

We noted 3 possibilities for NFL Quals and the possible impact on the MFL.

We are not having an official "Hall of Fame" Tournament. Instead, the MFL would like to

host the reception at NCFL Quals. Debbie will talk to Marc about this and see if he is willing for the MFL to host this event at his site during NCFL Quals.

7. The State of the Tim Averill invitational

There has been a discussion going on on-line among area Policy Debate coaches about how to help grow the Greater Boston Policy Debate league while also honoring Policy Debate as it has been traditionally done in this area of the country. They're having growing pains. But, the Averill tournament is going to run. The invitation is posted on-line.

There was a question about state sanctioning, but for Policy Debate, States is an open tournament, so no matter how the rules are modified at this tournament, students who want to will still be able to participate at States.

8. Create plans to finalize State Debate and State Speech

The biggest concern among member schools (outside of board members) recently has been the date of State Speech. It's too late in the season. Moving State Speech to 31 March is problematic because some private schools are on vacation then, but other schools point out that there is a 6-week gap between the last local speech tournament and our scheduled State Finals tournament. That isn't good for anyone.

Motion by Cunningham: Move State Speech & Debate to March 31 at a site or sites to be determined.

Second by Donnelly – The motion passes: 7 yes; 1 no; 2 abstain.

This motion passed. Note that the date for State Speech Finals is now March 31, along with State Debate Finals.

Dan & Sarah are going to see if they can find a location that is big enough to host both tournaments. Sarah has been actively looking for a college campus to host us and will keep us updated as to their progress.

9. Affirm the organization for the Novice Speech and Debate tournament at Sacred Heart

(See June 23, 2011 notes for specifics).

Additions: P.J. will panel debate.

Group discussion topics need to be written.

Debbie talked about the coaches' symposium. The invitation will be part of the novice tournament invitation.

10. Update about Photos on MFL Website

We discussed the issue of permission for the use of images of students on our website and didn't come up with any clear resolution. Because photos of people over 18 years

of age are not an issue, we may use old photos to make our website more personal or use photos of things like trophies, that do not involve people.

11. Update on policy/procedure for dealing with judges who behave inappropriately at tournaments.

We need a mechanism for how to handle situations that are serious but don't warrant calling the police.

Suggestion: When a coach brings an issue to the board, the plurality of the board present at the tournament can decide to ask the judge to leave the tournament and/or the option of putting them on probation.

Let's look at the MIAA rules for a model.
Debbie will draft something to share with the board.

12. We discussed 7th and 8th graders who compete at high school tournaments and clarified our rules (as written in our constitution.)

Motion to by Murphy at 8:31 pm.
Second by Wexler.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Honeyman,

Secretary/VP