

MSDL Board Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2020 @ 10:00 AM
ZOOM meeting

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by the president, Greg Cunningham

Board Members in attendance

Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Scott Caron, Josh Cohen, Greg Cunningham, Sue Hennessey, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Chris Sheldon, PJ Wexler and Keith West.

We were joined by past presidents and previous board members: Sarah Donnelly, Amanda Parker, Marc Rischitelli, Susan Marianelli, Hannah & Gabriel Hopkins.

This meeting was called for the purpose of discussing the possibility of running a Massachusetts Speech & Debate State Tournament, perhaps over the weekend of May 23-25, 2020 (Memorial Day Weekend), and planning some of the logistics if we decide to go forward.

We began by agreeing that if we can make a state tournament happen in an affordable way, we'd like to make this happen. There are still a lot of logistics to work out before we can commit to holding this tournament!

Dates

We wonder if Memorial Day weekend is the best weekend to hold this tournament or if we should try to find another weekend. We talked about other options. Our concerns include conflicting with AP Exams, the NSDA tournaments, and graduations. But we also don't want to assume that families will be around and will want their kids to participate over Memorial Day weekend. Will things have opened up enough for families to travel?

- Do we want to explore some weekends in June?
- Shall we put out a poll asking folks what they prefer?

We talked about this for quite a while.

Motion: West - Run the State Tournament over Memorial Day Weekend

2nd: Wexler

It was passed, without objection, to run the tournament over Memorial Day weekend (if we are able to hold the tournament.)

Fees

We hope teams will be willing/able to pay a little more per entry over what we charged last year in order to make this happen. There are no bus costs and teams may have saved some money in the past few months because NCFLs was cancelled and they did not have to pay for travel and entry fees to the last few local tournaments (that were cancelled). Hopefully they can afford it.

Room Needs

We estimate that we'll need 100-110 "live" rooms, including debate, live speech rooms + prep rooms. We also need to run rounds for pre-recorded events.

On-Line Platform

To use the platform used at TOCs, the costs are quite prohibitive. The fee is \$50 per room per day + tech support fees which will total more than \$12,000. There is no discount available. Given how costly this particular platform is, we don't feel that we can use it. We will see if we can hire someone (or find someone willing to volunteer) to program for us for less. Sarah & Kacz are reaching out to a few people

about doing the programming we need. One fear: the platform will be untested before we use it, so we'll need to do a dry run before actually trying to run a tournament.

- PJ is going to be judging a Google based tournament today. He'll let us know how that goes.
- Paid Zoom accounts are not that expensive. The League can afford to buy several of these as needed. Perhaps use a main room in Zoom and dispatch people into break-out rooms. Maybe each room is an event room?

After sharing some ideas, we decided to wait to talk about specifics until we know what platform we would use offers as possibilities.

Re: Judges

Alumni judges may be available in larger numbers than usual.

We need to work out the logistics

- How long do we want to give judges to judge the pre-recorded events?
- Do we want to try to replicate rounds so folks can "be" there - even for pre-recorded events?

Again, we decided to wait for further conversation about logistics until we get more details to work out any of the specifics.

Schedule

Maybe run Round 1 Speech & Rounds 1 & 2 of debate on Friday evening so we can see how it goes and then work out technical glitches before jumping into everything on Saturday?

Maybe for debate, run a few rounds on Thursday evening so we can have a more relaxed schedule?

It is clear that we are going to have to adjust some of the rules regarding our state tournaments in order to shift to an on-line environment.

Moved: Albert "The three tournament directors for debate, speech & congress will be deputized to waive tournament rules as needed to facilitate the running of the tournament.

2nd: West

Passed without objection.

Moved: Wexler: Eliminate all bid requirements for both speech & debate States for this year only.

2nd: West

Passed without objection.

Event specifics

What about DUO and MULT?

Can we give kids the option of competing in these events even though they can't record together in person? Are there opportunities where this can be done in a new, creative way? Does it change the events too much to still call them DUO and MULT? Does it put too much pressure on the tournament if every team adds a multiple? Would it be recorded? Live?

We need to talk about Double/Triple entry, too.

These decisions were pushed off until Monday because we don't know enough about how our on-line tournament would operate yet. (Too much depends upon platform capabilities.)

Topics

Assuming the tournament goes forward Debate Topics will be

PFD: February topic

LD: Jan/Feb topic

Communication

In order to keep the league informed, Greg will send out a note to coaches, linking to the meeting minutes, so that people can see what we're thinking about.

We also need to share information about how to prepare videos for competition that will help all teams prepare and make sure everyone is conforming to the same structures. (Joyce will look into doing that).

Motion by West: to recess until Monday, April 27 at 7:00 PM

2nd: Hennessey

The meeting recessed at 11:36 AM

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Secretary/Clerk