

Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2019 at 7:00 PM
Needham High School, Room 423

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by the president, Greg Cunningham.

Board Members Present: Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Scott Caron, Josh Cohen, Greg Cunningham, Sue Hennessey, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Chris Sheldon, Keith West, PJ Wexler

AGENDA

1. Novice Tournament Prep (Who will do what)

MATERIALS

- We will use paper ballots for speech. Joyce has some, but wanted to be sure that someone could make more if needed. Greg & Scott volunteered.
- Extemp Committee will write questions + Lisa will prepare & bring them
- Sue will take care of impromptu topics
- Congress legislation is posted.
- Mark & Greg will do Group Discussion topics (Topic: Emerging technologies)
- Debate would like to use electronic balloting. Josh will check to see if the infrastructure exists.
- Sue ordered buttons
- Joyce will put together radio copy and Greg will copy it.

STAFFING

- Debate staffing: (Josh will not be there). Keith & PJ will run debate.
- Speech staffing: Joyce & Julia
- Congress staffing: Joe B & Katie Larkin
- Sue will do Extemp & Radio prep
- Chris is going to run a judge briefing for our speech student judges to set a positive tone.

- Chris, Greg & Sue will greet new schools and help them get oriented.

- Lisa & Jim will do the SPEECH judge training.

- Chris will coordinate the showcase

- Modest Novice debate topic will be used for LD

- We will double-flight in PF, therefore ask for 1 judge per 3 entries. Invitation can encourage or invite teams to bring more judges than the minimum. If we have enough, we can single flight judges even though we will be double-fighting rounds.

- \$5 per student registration fees

- Jim will buy cupcakes for all of the kids + student judges

2. Revere Tournament Prep

Greg gave us an update about Dighton-Rehoboth. A parent emailed asking for help with the team. They are not running a tournament the weekend of October 26. Revere stepped up to take the date.

- Speech & Congress only (M-E offers other debate events - Policy, LD, and PF)
Do we offer Big Questions? Who can run it? Greg will sound some folks out about it
- Joyce will check with Mark re: Impromptu and group prompts, extemp final round topic area etc.

3. Move to revise MSDL Rules and Regulations (v. 2019 04 16), Section 3.3.3.3, Public Forum table so that: (1) Team 1 Summary and Team 2 Summary speech duration is 3 minutes, and (2) Preparation time (cumulative - per side) is 3 minutes, with MSDL tournament directors having the option at their tournaments of making preparation time 2 minutes per side. (Josh et al)

Josh explained the reasons for the proposed changes. Brother Cavet sent in a note strongly urging that we not adopt this rule change because he believes that the event less accessible to the “public” judge. Josh argued that having more time allows students to do a better job summarizing their thoughts. It also brings us in line with what the rest of the country is doing. After a brief discussion we voted.

Call the question: Wexler
2nd: West

Yes: 6
No: 0
Abstain:3

The resolution passes.

4. State Debate schedule options (Josh et al)

Last year at States, PF teams with 4-1 records and good points, did not clear to the top 8 (elimination rounds). We went from 62 to almost 90 teams from 2018 to 2019 and this lead to the problem. We do not want to repeat that situation. Sheryl K. proposed a 2-day tournament for debate.

This discussion focused on Public Forum Debate

Benefits:

- This would ensure 6 preliminary rounds and everyone with 4-2 or better record would advance.
- Stretching out the tournament makes it possible to double-flight debate, allowing us to avoid using ‘undesirable’ spaces.
- Allows for a more relaxed tournament, maybe not burning out judges so quickly - especially if schools bring different judges each day

Costs:

- It's Two Days instead of one, at a time of the year when the Tab Staff is exhausted.
- It's two days on a two-day weekend, which makes it even more exhausting
- Chelmsford doesn't think they can host both days
- Our costs double (custodial fees + insurance fees)
- Judge exhaustion is a big deal
 - We would need a lot more judges because most won't judge both days
- Participation may be down. Families and kids are overbooked. Reducing participation is a cost to consider.

Alternatively

- Split entries into Varsity & JV
- Run semi-finals through the awards ceremony and run finals afterwards,
- This would allow us to advance all 4-1 entries to octofinals.
- This would make for a really hard, long day in debate -- but it's just one day instead of two
- Concern about burning out judges who will be exhausted by the end of the day (judge overburden)
 - We may be able to address that by asking teams to bring more judges or maybe by having split day judges

We may need to look for other solutions down the line. Two days? More bids needed to qualify for States? We will revisit later.

Motion: Adopt Josh's one-day proposal - West

2nd: Wexler

Yes: 6

No: 0

Abstain: 4

The motion passes.

5. Creation of a committee to discuss the desirability of writing a Modest Novice' PF topic to be used at the MSDL novice festival and 'encouraged' to be used annually for novice tournaments sanctioned by the MSDL through Thanksgiving. (PJ)

- Gives teams something to prepare for every year with their novices
- Helpful for new programs
- We'll always have a topic that's appropriate for novice development
- For one year, programs will have to prepare two topics. But from then on, this topic is already prepared.
- Everyone is on the same playing field. Established programs don't have advantage of varsity kids handing cases to novices. After the first year most teams will have some prepared materials.

This proposal is just to form a committee to discuss the idea. We agreed it's a good idea to talk.

PJ Wexler will chair this committee. Anyone interested in being on the committee should send PJ Wexler a note. We are particularly interested in having non-board members serve on the committee.

6. Training to ensure our judges comment appropriately on ballots. (PJ)

- Can we adequately address the issues during a judge briefing?
- Should we prepare a handout to distribute at judge orientation?
- How can we hope to address serious cultural biases in a judge briefing?
- We can instruct judges to set aside factors that a person cannot control. (Height, voice, gender).

It's definitely worth taking a few minutes in judge briefings to sensitize judges to the fact that they may have biases that they are not aware of. Put the seed in their heads and let the judges run with it. Try to guide the judges, rather than direct them. "Would a reasonable person find the comment to be problematic?" If the answer is 'yes', don't say it.

Should we prepare a document? A "judge mission statement"?

In debate specifically, the data seem to suggest that alumni judges are the biggest problems. There is a study on the website "[Beyond Resolved.](#)" It seems to be the folks who are one or two years out that are the most biased.

Online tutorial of online balloting would be very helpful to provide more time in the judge meeting to address issues like this.

7. W9 on the Website? (Jim)

Some schools require a W9 in order to pay the MSDL. Can we post ours on the MSDL website so teams can download it? Is there a good reason not to do that? Our tax ID number is public. Our lawyer's address is on the W9, not one of ours. We'll look into it.

About participation agreement: Last year was our first year doing it and it went well. We will continue to require schools to do this yearly.

8. New Business

- PJ is looking for MSDL history documents and information and asks folks to send him any information they may have.

9. Next Meeting Schedule

November 18, 2019 - 7:00 PM at Needham H.S.

January 27, 2020 - 7:00 PM at Needham H.S.

March 9, 2020 - 7:00 PM at Needham H.S.

Annual Meeting: Saturday, May 2, 2020 - 11:00 AM at Needham H.S.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman Clerk/Secretary