

**MFL Board Meeting
January 29, 2012
Milton Academy**

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 am by the president, Debbie Simon.

Board Members present: Rob Croteau, Chris Sheldon, Jim Murphy, PJ Wexler, Debbie Simon, Josh Cohen, Sarah Donnelly, Lisa Honeyman, Joyce Albert, Dan Sapir

We began with opening with remarks by Debbie, Sarah and others, thanking the league for its work with students in Massachusetts. The MFL provides a wonderful learning experience for the students in this state.

The Board would like to Thank Debbie Simon for a lovely brunch to start the meeting.

I. REPORTS

a. Treasurer's Report – Rob

Finances are fine. We only have 8 regular programs yet to pay their membership dues. Rob is working on that. Susan is working on filing the tax returns.

We have had a request from one new program that is struggling financially for a diminished membership fee.

Motion by Croteau: Waive fee for Pope John's first year membership dues due to expressed financial hardship.

Second: Sheldon

Vote: unanimously approved

b. Update on non-profit status progress – Susan

- Susan was unable to meet with us today. She has called our lawyer and is waiting to hear back. She will handle the IRS filings this year.

c. Update on technology purchasing/discussion of speech computer – Lisa & Sarah

- We purchased 2 printers for the MFL because they were on sale and we really needed them.

- Sarah & Lisa looked into laptops for the league. Given that at many of the tournaments we have access to computer labs for speech tabulation and at others, we are using our own personal computers, we wondered if the league really needs to buy one? There was also disagreement about which type to buy if we were to buy one. So, we did not end up buying computers and wonder if we really need one for speech.

Josh has cleaned up the debate computer and it is working better now. Don't know how much life it has left in it, but it is working fine now. Do we want to wait until it stops working or get one soon? There was general consensus that we should get a new computer for debate sooner rather than later and use the older one as a backup.

Sarah will take on the responsibility for buying the computer for debate.

Use of iPad outside to look things up has been fantastic! So many of us have iPads now, we don't need to buy one for the league.

II. PRESSING NEW BUSINESS

- a. **STATES – URGENT need to find a host site or sites. We are currently WITHOUT a site for the combined championship scheduled for March 31. College campuses proved to be far beyond our means in terms of rental fees. Most high schools are too small to suit our needs. At this point, we are very close to splitting the two tournaments to two separate sites, but it is probably too late to change the set date. Also need to assign duties, IE invitation(s), paneling, etc.**

Sarah looked into universities. Most don't have enough rooms for us to run the tournament. Northeastern wanted \$80,000. (Far above our budget). Bottom line: We will not be able to hold States at a local college/university.

Hopeful site: Boston Latin has indicated that they would like to host. Sarah will follow up on this with Amalie Baker and the headmaster of the school. We need to know how many rooms they have, areas of the building we'll be able to use etc. What about the food part of hosting? – that needs to be nailed down.

We also need a strong back-up plan.

Debbie will contact Lincoln-Sudbury, Brockton & Newton North to check for availability.

Other options:

Change the date? – Really not an option at this point. It's too late in the season.

PJ would prefer to have one event on April 28. He advocates for having Speech on March 31 and debate on April 28.

Run the two tournaments at two different sites? - Not ideal. And we don't have sites.

Can debate start on Friday?

Many schools cannot afford 2 buses. Getting judges for 2 days is really expensive.

We need to make a decision by February 11, but we may be able to do this before that. Sarah & Debbie will report back to the board once they know more.

- b. **Entry and qualification rules for State Tournament(s). Revisit last year's debate qualification decisions. Revisit standing procedures regarding students entering in more than one event. Revisit doublespeak award procedures.**

Sarah will send out a reminder to coaches about what the qualification process is with input from Chairs of debate, speech & congress. A "pre-invite" - A single document covering qualification for debate, speech, congress etc.

Some discussion about triple-entry, etc. at States. General consensus to leave things the way they were last year.

Doublespeak awards: Wondering if this is still meaningful if we run both debate & speech on the same day? We decided it was. We do need to dedicate someone to this task during the day of the tournament. Do we include finals? (yes). We talked about the groups and then the following motion was made:

Motion to Consolidate by Sheldon. Second by Croteau.

Unanimously approved.

There will be three areas in the invitation: Interp, Limited Prep & Group speak.

c. Use of Electronic Equipment in Limited Prep events (VX, NX, GD) and in DEBATE

Jim Murphy proposed that we adopt **current** (as of January 29, 2012) NFL rules for electronic device use for debate. (He presented 3 pages from the NFL rules). He suggests in Policy debate it works well.

This is current practice in the MFL now. We need to adopt some rules. The proposed wording of the motion is as follows. This will be voted on at NCFL Quals on February 11, 2012.

Motion by Murphy: We adopt the current (as of January 29, 2012) NFL rules for electronic device use in MFL debate. Second by Donnelly.

We had a discussion about use of iPads in Group Discussion. According to MFL rules, students are not allowed to use electronic devices in limited prep events – including Group Discussion, Radio and Extemp, but in Group discussion students are using iPads. Wording for a proposal to allow iPads (or laptops) in Group Discussion follows. This will be voted on at NCFL Quals on February 11, 2012. If it does not pass, tournament invitations going forwards should include a reminder that current MFL rules do not allow use of electronic devices in any limited prep events, including Group, Radio and Extemp.

Motion by Honeyman: We allow electronic device use in Group Discussion with the following stipulation: Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside of the competition room are prohibited.

d. Hall of Fame Committee - Need to appoint members so they can proceed with the 2012 process.

PJ & Joyce agreed to be on this committee. We will ask Dick Gaudette.

The committee needs to convene and announce before States.

III. PROPOSED DISCUSSIONS

a. Discussion on consequences for dishonest/disrespectful student behavior in rounds. (Lisa)

- i. **Students who lie to judges about double-entry - either so that they can leave early or arrive late to a round, thus attempting to gain a competitive advantage.**

Our rules of professionalism state that students will listen attentively to all students in the round.

We should have a rule that states explicitly that students are expected to arrive to rounds in a timely manner and stay throughout the round unless they were double-entered.

We may need the equivalent of a challenge committee to handle these sorts of situations.

- ii. **Students who are caught texting during a round while other students are speaking.**

This falls under rule 2.1 (Rules of Professionalism) too, and would be dealt with via the previous proposal.

This will be voted on at NCFL Quals on February 11, 2012:

Motion by Honeyman: The MFL board may create an ombudsman committee at each tournament in order to handle complaints of violations of MFL Rule 2.1, "Rules of Professionalism" on a case by case basis. This committee shall include the tournament director as well as at least two MFL board members not directly involved in the situation. Simple majority will rule. The committee is empowered to enact a range of consequences, up to and including disqualification. Rulings of this committee are final.

- b. **Discussion on dealing with judges who behave inappropriately at tournaments. At the last meeting, it was decided that we need a mechanism for how to handle situations that are serious but do not warrant calling the police. It was suggested that in these circumstances, the plurality of the board present can decide to ask the judge to leave the tournament and/or the option of putting them on probation. It was further suggested that the board review MIAA rules for a model. (Lisa)**

Motion: Set up a committee as needed as written in agenda (above) by Honeyman.

A coach may bring a concern about inappropriate judge behavior to the board members present at a tournament. In these circumstances, the plurality of the board present can decide to ask the judge to leave the tournament and/or the option of putting them on probation.

Second: Wexler.

Approved Unanimously

- c. **Discussion on a request received by a recent MFL alumni who wishes to make a documentary film about forensics for a college class. The student would like access to MFL spring tournaments. Is this something we can allow, and if so,**

what actions need to be taken (IE: release forms). (Debbie)

There were many concerns about this proposal regarding release forms etc. Debbie will follow up to find out what the student has in mind.

d. Discussion on MFL board members counting as judges at tournaments. Past agreements have suggested that only one board member per school be allowed to list themselves as a judge at tournaments. (Sarah)

There has been a 'gentle-person's agreement' to try not to list ourselves (Board Members) as judges on tournament registration – or to only list one Board Member even if there are two from the same school. Is this a good idea? Board members make the tournaments run and are putting significant amounts of work into them. Why shouldn't they count as judges in the judge ratio? It is very hard for some schools to get enough judges and by continuing with this practice, we handicap them, even though they are working hard to make the tournament work.

Discussion resolved: Anyone listed on the judge list is eligible to judge. If you're listed, you may very well end up with rounds. However, if a team wants to list all of their Board Members as a judges, that's their prerogative.

Debbie notes – it would be great if more board members judged rounds – especially at States!

e. Discussion on inability to double enter in limited prep events. (Dan)

What's the pulse about this? Could we potentially allow Extemp & Radio to double-enter?

This is a tournament director's choice, not something that the MFL Board can dictate. We need to be sure not to tell tournament directors what to do. We allow it, but with constraints at States.

f. Discussion on what constitutes a novice. (Dan)

See section 2.2 in the MFL Rules & Regulations document for current wording on Novice status rules.

We, as a league, have an obligation to set up fair rounds.

Should the MFL be "micromanaging" what a coach and parent decides to do when it comes to entry?

Some feel that the MFL has no business policing what parents and coaches do.

This discussion ended without any consensus to change existing rules.

IV. PROPOSED RULES AMENDMENT

2.1.10. Recording in Rounds. Audio and visual recording in rounds at MFL sanctioned tournaments is forbidden without the explicit permission of the tournament director and the MFL board. (Lisa)

This falls into MFL Section 2.1 and the Ombudsman committee's judgment as far as penalty.

Second: Donnelly.

Passed without objection.

V. NEW COMMITTEES NEEDED

- a. **Debate Rules committee -- we need a committee to write/update rules for debate and then bring them to the rest of the board for approval.**

Jim, PJ and Josh will form this committee.

- b. **Speech Rules committee -- to clarify rules and make the ballots consistent for similar events.**

Joyce, Debbie, Chris, Lisa will form this committee.

MEETING DATE FOR FULL LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING:

SATURDAY, JUNE 2 at Milton Academy at 10:00 am.

NEW BUSINESS

Can a student who leaves an MFL school and now attends another Massachusetts school take her bids with her and enter States under her new school's auspices? Does that school need to join the MFL? (Chris)

General agreement.

Needham Parent Award reminder. Details in Needham Tournament invitation. (PJ)

Debbie will run another judge training event at Needham. Register novice judges for the training. They'll have 1st round off for the extended training. (Debbie)

Announcement: **Annual Hall of Fame reception** to honor new inductee, Greg Cunningham, will be held at Shrewsbury High School at 3:00 pm.

Sarah will send out an e-mail to coaches from registered MFL schools notifying people.

Joyce will send out invitations to past awardees. Debbie will do food.

Motion to adjourn: Sapir. Second: Donnelly

The president adjourned the meeting at 2:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Honeyman
VP/Secretary