



Massachusetts Middle School Speech League

Fall Meeting
Saturday, September 12, 2020, 9:00 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

- I. Meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Lis.
- II. **Roll call:** Board Vice President Craig Powers/Shrewsbury, Board President Lis Venetiou/The Pike School, Vivian Powers/Shrewsbury Middle School, Ellen Eberly/Catholic Memorial, Board Treasurer Christina Manos/Sherwood Middle School, Board Clerk Yoshi Makishima/Milton Academy, Shawn Verrier/Derby Academy, Board Member-at-Large Kim Vanaman/NCE
- III. MEETING MINUTES:
 - A. Board Election
 1. Craig: proposed we defer election unless any League member was especially interested in being involved in a new way. There are no term limits
 2. Ellen: may be good practice to put self-nomination process forward, to encourage newer members.
 3. Kim: possible to create a new board position?
 - a) Lis: A DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) board member would be useful right now.
 - b) Kim: Also: a website manager would be good (updates with photos, refreshing content, etc.)
 4. Lis: issue of timing? Were we supposed to initiate the process in the Spring, according to procedure?
 - a) Ellen: it's a special year; might need to be postponed after all.
 5. Lis: defer elections for this year, explore possible new positions, and aim for a Spring election to give people more notice to prepare.
 - a) Kim: combine new interest areas under a new "at large" position?
 6. Craig: either way, an official decision should be made. (We may already be in violation of our bylaws, but consequences are unclear.)
 7. Craig: motion forwarded.
 - a) Seconded by Kim.
 - b) All in favor.

- B. Statement for website about the League's position on Diversity and Inclusion and our commitment to anti-racist practices.
1. Members present viewed current statement from Spring 2020.
 2. Kim & Yoshi: Necessity of including language regarding anti-racist practices and commitment to racial justice.
 3. Yoshi: may be good to hold off until we can promise action, from the Board or from a new DEI Board member.
 4. Craig: League can update judge materials with some kind of bias training this year (NSDA offers material.)
 - a) Ellen: Proposes we see any training videos before the competition, because it's turning off students and judges; competition day runs too long, in part because the morning training is spent on a lot of repetitive info. Onus should be on coaches to make sure their judges educate themselves.
 - b) Kim: notify judges that there will be no day-of training.
 - (1) Vivian: how can we ensure that they actually do the training?
 - (2) Lis: as a League, create a Google Form checklist of resources, to prove they've completed the training? (Still no way to prove they actually viewed training materials...)
 - (3) Ellen: offer training as early as possible (at least 2 weeks.)
 - (4) Kim: box to check allowing judges to state whether they have prior experience. Also: allow more focused training (bias training will be necessary for everyone, but some may only need more specific.) 40 minutes or so, total, for beginners.
 - (5) Craig: what do we do about late-joining judges?
 - (6) Yoshi: possible to create a Google form with a response message or certificate for judges to send to their team's coach as proof of training?
 - (7) Vivian & Christina: this assumes a LOT of commitment on the part of the judges, and that judges will prepare in a timely fashion.
 - (a) Echoed by Tim - can be challenging to convince and recruit judges, as it is.
 - (8) Christina: Shrewsbury Team usually holds a parent meeting, which is MUCH easier and quicker if parents can be directed to video resources.
 - (9) Craig: NSDA Nationals doesn't even require training. Should keep is optional.
 - (10) Kim: we need different "tracks" - for new judges, and for returners who need guidance on specific areas (like timing.)
 - (11) Lis: to summarize, resources should be available early and often, so judges can access. Approach should be

respectful; nothing should be strictly required, just offered. (Don't specify timing; 40 minutes may be too intimidating.)

(12) Lis: are we completely doing away with judge training?

(a) Kim: would significantly reduce the length of the day to do 5 minutes of welcome, then get into the tournament itself. Will be a big adjustment, but will be a good practice going forward.

(b) Yoshi: judges, especially new ones, tend to take the responsibility seriously and are often anxious about understanding procedure; will probably willingly watch videos to prepare themselves.

(c) Ellen: CM has a partner system; likewise, other teams should encourage parents educating each other, so it doesn't all fall to the coach.

5. Lis: we haven't gotten to introductions; brief interlude to introduce League members present.
 - a) New League member Shawn Verrier from Derby present.
 - b) Update from Tim: Natick high school team has been given the go-ahead; hopeful same will go for the middle school team this year.
6. Yoshi: where are we leaving the DEI statement?
 - a) Lis: agree it has to be connected to policy, but what can we do in the meantime?
 - (1) Kim: mention anti-bias training will be provided, and we are creating a new position for the Spring.
 - (2) Craig: should make addition to League rules regarding appointment of new Board member.
7. Yoshi will draft a new statement, will send to Board for approval.

C. Treasury Report

1. Christina: offered update on current balance; noted that the Big Questions Debate grant makes up a large part of the current balance, and is earmarked for specific use.
 - a) Additional payment still owed to Kim for Nationals scholarship.
2. Christina: dues have historically been difficult to collect. Will be easier this year because checks need to be mailed, but hoping to streamline the process during a non-virtual year.
 - a) Yoshi: possible to set up an online system?
 - b) Craig: possible, but some of the processing fees will eat some of the money.
 - c) Christina: most people may with checks, so that may be challenging.
3. Lis moves to accept the treasurer's report; all in favor.

D. Tournament Calendar

1. Lis: several tournaments listed as in-person, which is probably not going to be possible at this point. Also concerned that school start dates have been pushed back, and social distancing makes it difficult to assemble and recruit students.
 - a) Lis: open up a later, more casual first tournament to allow students (even “nontraditional” novices) to connect and learn the new platform.
 - (1) Christina: agreed. We’ve never done a live virtual tournament, would be better to ease in.
 - (2) Ellen: also agreed, but emphasized the need for a short event (e.g. 3 hours.) Maybe only do 2 rounds?
 - (3) Kim: might be a good idea to incorporate more Fling Events, for a friendlier-appearing event? Also: this event could be a good opportunity for judge training...
 - (a) Lis: probably not a good idea to set up expectation of in-person judge training. Also, some need to keep the tournament a little more serious, to prepare for future more formal tournaments and to keep more ambitious students engaged.
 - (b) Ellen: in favor of sticking with traditional events; more structure would be better.
 - (c) Lis: Combine both? A handful of traditional and Fling events?
 - (i) Kim: this may open up an equity issue; every traditional event deserves an opportunity.
 - (d) Lis: initial tournament should be all fun, or more traditional.
 - (i) Yoshi: if all-novice, Fling is okay; but if mixed Fling and traditional events, the tournament might be more appealing for returning students.
 - (ii) Kim: 2 tiers, one for novices, one for experienced students?
 - (iii) Lis: right now, no other novice opportunity on the calendar (due to RJ Grey cancellation)
 - (a) Christina: offer a Novice category?
 - (e) Issue of number of rooms and cost.
 - (i) Ellen: possible to pass cost onto families?
 - (ii) Christina: original estimate made based on novice meet; will be more expensive to run a tournament with both traditional AND novice rounds.
 - (iii) Yoshi: possible to combine novices and veterans, and include a top novice award?

- (a) Kim and Lis: might be too intimidating for novices.
- (f) Lis: low-bar novice tournament, keep it simple, allow veterans to get their experience on the platform by judging.
 - (i) Kim: market tournament as being as casual as possible, because the performance material will be new to the students, as well as the tournament procedures.
- (g) Craig: traditionally plenty of judges at novice meets, due to student judge participation.
- (4) Lis: consensus seems to be that we'll keep the tournament a novice meet, more than one judge per room. Move back to November 1st?
 - (a) Yoshi: Wilson/Al Hamra probably won't be in a position to host; suggested we should push two assured tournaments back a slot (Pike in November; Milton in December.)
 - (i) Tim: would really prefer to have an opportunity to observe a virtual tournament, but may still be open to hosting - especially since a physical space is no longer involved.
- (5) Kim: What are the responsibilities of the host? Now that we're virtual, there's an appealing freedom. More schools may be able to host if they don't need to provide a space.
 - (a) Yoshi: Wilson might move to January, if they're ready?
- 2. Sidebar: observers in rounds?
 - a) Lis: probably not a good idea for prelims, and definitely not for the novice meet.
 - (1) Craig: NSDA Campus can do public rooms, but that degrades the video quality.
 - (2) Lis: need for releases?
 - (a) Craig: yes; releases are necessary, because video from tournaments may end up being recorded without our knowledge.
 - (b) Christina: statement needed to remind folks that
 - (3) Kim: how many judges allowed in Campus?
 - (a) Craig: as many as we want.
 - (b) Kim: possible to allow parents to observe?
 - (c) Lis: probably not a good idea to encourage that practice.
 - (i) Ellen: CM usually allows parents to observe to train; may instead hold a team-only tournament to train judges.

E. New rules for Duo?

1. Yoshi: It appears Campus doesn't allow for screen arrangement.
 2. Lis: more research needed, but Duo shouldn't be done via pre-recorded video.
 - a) Lis: nominates Craig to do further research; nomination accepted.
- F. Virtual Tournament Protocols
1. Role of Host School (Outreach to scheduled hosts needed)
 - a) Design invite (and awards?), decide on events
 - (1) Kim: the invite is a pretty substantive project; will be a big contribution from the host school.
 - b) Lis: We will learn a fair bit about this from the Pike meet, and the Board will probably be taking a very active role in the planning and execution. We will be able to make more specific guidelines based on the experience we will gain from that tournament.
 - c) Finalizing platforms
 2. Campus financed by MMSSL via Lumos grant
 - a) Kim can write and send proposal along to Lumos rep.
 - b) Sidebar from Christina: do we want to suspend dues?
 - (1) Lis: don't eliminate, but offer a waiver for this year.
 - (2) Kim: we will need some resources, in addition to the Grant.
 - (3) Ellen: may be a good idea to increase team contribution, to increase commitment to the activity.
 - (a) Lis: in Spring, re-examine our financial structure, do some research on what other Leagues are doing, figure out if we need to charge more. But DON'T do it yet.
- G. MMSSL Tournament Host grant form
1. Grant form presented by Kim.
 2. Lis: instead of offering set amount, have teams request specific amount.
 - a) Vivian: probably won't cover full costs.
 - (1) Lis: will probably cover a virtual meet.
 - (2) Kim: even for an in-person meet with more costs, additional support will still be substantial.
 3. Christina: are we asking host schools to pay for Campus rooms?
 - a) Lis: ask the schools for a contribution?
 - (1) Christina: will introduce an equity issue.
 - b) Kim: Lumos rep was willing to finance virtual tournament expenses, and this year that's what we will use the grant for. In the meantime, host school grant applications will be tabled until next year, and the form will be corrected to specify that the grant will go to the costs of in-person tournament expenses.
 - (1) Kim: would like to credit Lumos for grant.
 - (a) Craig: add statement explaining that we do not endorse services based on donations.
 4. Lis moves to approve amended form; seconded by Craig; all in favor.
- H. Finalize virtual tournament code of conduct

1. Shared by Yoshi.
2. Lis & Christina: amend language regarding adult judges to include student judges.
3. Generally approved; will be posted to website.
 - a) Kim: consider carefully where on website the statement should go.
 - b) Need to amend the protest procedure?
4. Lis: needs to be clear who the tournament's designated support contact person is, and that tech and rules issues need to be brought to their attention in a timely manner.

I. Updated Calendar:

1. Post to website; specify that it is TENTATIVE.
2. **November 15th** - Pike Novice. 2 rounds, no finals. Anyone receiving a 1st gets an acknowledgement.
3. **December 6th** - Milton. Veterans and novices. 3 rounds, no finals. Anyone receiving a 1st gets an acknowledgement.
4. **January 10th** - HOST NEEDED; Novice meet, in-person. 3 rounds, with finals.
 - a) Lis: Post to website; encourage possible host?
 - b) Craig: question still remains, what does the hosting commitment entail?
 - (1) Yoshi: Pike model may be needed to collect this info.
 - c) Christina: "pending host", instead of "host needed"
 - (1) Kim: add comment that host description is forthcoming.
5. **January 24th (backup date: 31st)** - Shrewsbury. 3 rounds, with finals, double-entry allowed.
6. **February 28th (or 3/28)** - Pike. 3 rounds, with finals, double-entry allowed.
 - a) Big Questions offered?
 - (1) Craig: makes sense to use Big Questions grant to find those rooms.
7. **April 11th (backup date, 5/16)** - Spring Fling. 3 rounds, with finals, double-entry allowed.
 - a) Removing Fling events to uncomplicate tournament.
8. **May 2nd** - Milton Foley. 3 rounds, with finals, double-entry allowed, 2 Fling events.
 - a) Craig: Easter is April 4th; Orthodox Easter is May 2nd.
 - (1) Christina: public school vacation and Mother's Day give us few options.
 - (2) Kim: possible to move to Saturday?
 - (a) Lis: celebration is on Saturday night for Orthodox Easter.
9. **Late May (5/16 or 5/23)** - Fling events-only tournament
 - a) Lis: may be a League-hosted event, to not add additional burden to Newton.
10. Sidebar, Christina: media release should be made available ASAP for students, even with our first tournament pushed back to November.

- a) Kim: online ballot instructional video also needed.
 - (1) Craig: can edit last Spring's instructional video, but screen grabs of Campus may not be available.
 - (2) Yoshi: sub-committee needed?
 - (a) Yoshi, Kim, Christina, Craig discuss minimum requirements for judge training.

IV. 11:44am: meeting adjourned by Board President.