

TFL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 1, 2019 -- 10:00 a.m.

Durham Academy

Present:

Keith Pittman, Asheville HS -- Chair

Shannon Jarman, Cumberland International -- Vice Chair

Jeff Welty, Durham Academy -- Secretary

Leneise Stackley, Cumberland Polytechnic -- Non-Member Treasurer

Jonathan Peele, Charlotte Latin HS -- Historian

Deb Brown, Research Triangle

Michelle Boswell, Cumberland Polytechnic

Deb Henderson, Jack Britt

Kavita Persaud, Cape Fear Academy -- Guest

Crawford Leavoy, Durham Academy -- Guest

- I. **Call to Order.** Keith Pittman called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.
- II. **Approval of February Minutes.** A motion to approve the minutes was made and it passed unanimously.
- III. **Treasurer's Report.** Leneise Stackley presented a report. Our current balance is \$6,413. The state tournament registration was down a bit last year. A motion to approve the minutes was made. It passed unanimously.
- IV. **Webmaster's Report.** John Walker reported that the website is up to date. He noted that his 21-year-old son, also named John Walker (but he goes by J.R.), has been taking on some of the responsibility for maintaining the site. John proposed that J.R. serve as our webmaster at no charge. A motion was made to that effect and passed unanimously.
- V. **Sam Ervin Free Speech Award.** Keith Pittman reported that he has attempted to contact Nick Ochsner several times regarding the charity to which Nick would like to direct the \$200 award but has received no response. Jonathan Peele was able to contact him during the meeting and provided the required information to Leneise Stackley.
- VI. **Other old business.** None was noted.
- VII. **Officer elections and position appointments for 2019-2020.** There was a discussion about the need to support the Chair, and the need to groom future leaders of the organization. Keith Pittman was elected Chair unanimously. The current slate of officers was re-elected: Shannon Jarman as Vice Chair, Leneise Stackley as Treasurer, Jeff Welty as Secretary, and Jonathan Peele as Historian.
- VIII. **TFL Merchandise.** Thomas Surber of Mountain Heritage proposed, through Keith Pittman, that TFL pins and t-shirts be offered for sale at the state tournament. The group discussed that previously we ran into financial questions about selling merchandise without being a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Jonathan Peele stated that he would talk to Larry Shaheen about doing the paperwork pro bono to register us as a nonprofit. A motion to

table further discussion of merchandise pending the outcome of that discussion was made and passed unanimously.

- IX. 2019-2020 TFL Calendar.** Keith Pittman stated that dates are being added to the website the same day that they are submitted. There was some discussion about the possibility of Myers Park moving to January and/or becoming a one-day tournament.
- X. TFL History.** Keith Pittman stated that the league's history has been updated and is on the website. There are some gaps and anyone who can fill them in is encouraged to contact a member of the committee.
- XI. 2020 tournament bid process.** The committee reviewed the bid form and bid process and by consensus decided to add an optional request for information from a network administrator about the robustness of the school's wireless network. The committee discussed whether to require that the host provide more than 10 debate judges, but decided to leave that requirement unchanged. Per the committee's decision in December, the bid form will be sent out shortly and will be due on October 1, 2019. At Keith's suggestion, the bid process will be run online through Google Forms this year.
- XII. TFL Dues.** The deadline for dues last year was the end of February. Past that point, a school could still compete at the tournament if it paid its dues and a \$25 penalty fee, but that school's coaches could not be nominated for the board or for coach of the year, and could not vote for board seats or awards. By consensus, the committee agreed to continue the same system. The Treasurer will post invoices as soon as possible.
- XIII. TFL Bid Process**
- a. *Revisions.* Last year we reduced the number of "legs" required for entry from four to three because several tournaments were cancelled due to weather. This year the four will be back in place absent similar circumstances. Although there was some sense that increasing the stringency of qualification over time may be desirable, no further changes were proposed for this year.
 - b. *Appoint bid keepers.* Chris Harrow emailed Keith to say that he would be willing to continue keeping bids. There was a motion to re-appoint Jonathan Peele and Chris Harrow as bid keepers. The motion passed unanimously.
 - c. *Awarding bids for TFL Affiliate member tournaments.* Affiliate members are non-voting supporters of the TFL. In the past, Wake Forest was an affiliate member. Keith Pittman suggested that we allow universities again to join as affiliate members -- and that tournaments hosted by affiliate members be eligible to award bids to the state tournament. (The current application of this principle would be regarding the Duke tournament.) By consensus, the committee agreed. A discussion ensued about when the affiliate membership must be paid. There was a motion to make payment due with the bid request form, and it passed unanimously.
- XIV. TFL Tournament debriefing.** A number of issues were discussed, including:
- A. The food for judges and coaches was not great and was in short supply at times. There was a motion to add to the bid form a requirement that schools submitting bids talk with the committee before the location of the tournament is determined,

as well as attend all subsequent TFL meetings to explain how they plan to handle logistics including food. The motion passed unanimously.

- B. We should promote the event to the media, including by drafting a press release ahead of time. A committee member could do this, by consensus the committee agreed to appoint one closer to the tournament.
- C. The varsity LD pool was 21, down from 30. Total entries were 334, down from 377. This could be due to the bid process, or the absence of one of two big schools. A long discussion ensued about how the location of the tournament impacts attendance.
- D. Lauren Burdt was a great tournament manager.
- E. Some final round judge panels were not geographically balanced. There was general support for addressing that by coding regions in Tabroom, but a robust discussion ensued about how many regions -- East/West? East/Central/West? Major metropolitan areas? There was a motion to code two regions, East and West, based on NSDA districts, and to tell Tabroom and the tournament manager not to create an entire final round panel of judges from a single region. The motion carried unanimously. There was a bit of discussion about whether we should code other factors into Tabroom, such as coach vs. parent vs. former competitor, but there was no conclusion to that discussion.
- F. Some judges may have conferred in elimination rounds, which we could address by having committee members be non-judging chairs/monitors.

XV. Proposed changes for next year

- a. *Tabulation software access.* By consensus, the committee plans to continue using Tabroom. It is free and works well. During the last tournament, there was a controversy about whether committee members should have administrative access to Tabroom, theoretically allowing those coaches access to information on ballots, including the ballots of their students' future opponents, that they could use to advantage their students. As a result of that controversy, during the tournament, Keith closed off administrative access to everyone other than Lauren and himself. Jeff Welty moved that Keith as chair decide who needs administrative access to Tabroom for tournament operations purposes, and that he grant access only to those persons. The motion passed 4-0 with Welty, Henderson, Brown, and Boswell in favor and others abstaining. Subsequently Jonathan Peele moved that we publicly release, to the maximum degree that Tabroom will allow, results and ballots in real time. Discussion ensued about whether this would be helpful transparency, or instead would discourage students who aren't doing well, or would allow coaches/parents who judge to game their decisions more effectively to benefit their own students. The motion failed, with Peele and Welty in favor and Boswell, Brown, and Jarman opposed. Further discussion of releasing anything in real time was tabled until a later time.
- b. *Judge quota discussion.* We ran short of judges, again, especially for debate. We had to use some speech judges to judge debate. We could not find enough judges to hire. Crawford suggested that local schools, defined as those within 60

miles of the tournament, could be obligated to provide double the quota of judges, or otherwise have some increased burden. By consensus, the committee agreed that the hired judge fee should be \$200 for all events (up from \$80 in speech and PF). Keith suggested that we not let schools “hire” a judge from the tournament unless we actually have judges to hire out. By consensus, the committee agreed; and further agreed that the 10 judges provided by the host school would not count as being available to hire. By consensus, the committee agreed that member will be appointed in October to start working on recruiting hired judges, offering them \$200 to judge. A motion was made to impose a \$500 no judge (or judge no show) fee and the motion failed unanimously. A motion was made to impose a \$300 no judge (or judge no show) fee and the motion passed unanimously.

- c. *Awards ceremony.* The committee briefly discussed whether to continue reading the full list of hall of fame members at the awards ceremony or whether members could be recognized in some other way such as in a pre-awards video or by naming the final round of an event after a hall of fame member.
- d. *Proposal to change debate speaker point rules.* Jonathan Peele moved that the tournament allow half points, and the motion passed unanimously.
- e. *Proposal to define first tiebreaker in speech explicitly as cumulative ranks.* Jonathan Peele moved that speech placement order be defined by criteria in order, starting with total ranks dropping the low round, then total ranks including all rounds, then continuing with the same meaning as the manual currently provides. The motion passed unanimously.
- f. *Proposal to require two sweepstakes teams tallying separately as an accuracy check.* By consensus, the committee agreed that sweepstakes awards be calculated by two people or groups working separately to ensure accuracy.

XVI. TFL Initiatives for 2019-20 and beyond. Build out social media presence? We’re on Facebook a little and that’s it. Have a coaches’ listserv or Facebook group to allow collegial discussion?

XVII. Member school concerns. All the concerns noted to Keith in advance are reflected in the items above.

XVIII. The meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

Current TFL Committee—all terms end at end of year:

Michelle Boswell—Cumberland Polytechnic
Deborah Brown—Research Triangle
Chris Harrow—Ardrey Kell
Deb Henderson—Jack Britt
Shannon Jarman—Cumberland International
Jonathan Peele—Charlotte Latin
Keith Pittman—Asheville

Jeff Welty--Durham Academy
Joshua Wade--Croatan