

VMEA Northwest District I

Meeting Minutes ~ February 8th, 2007

Winter Festival Meeting

Call to order 7:00. New president Caleb Pillsbury presiding.

In attendance:

Joanne Scott, Patty Griffin, Brooke Ostrander, Eric Bushey, Bruce McRae, Randy Wheeler, Peter Matthews, Caleb Pillsbury, Gisele McRae, Betzi Irwin, Andy Frappier, Marilyn Sink, Donna Costes, Jessica LaRocque, Mary Bauer

Introduction: Allyson Anoe (sp?), string teacher at MMU

Special Guests:

Lisa Finlayson, student teacher at Mount Mansfield Union
Chris Comstock, student teacher at BFA St. Albans

Announcements

- There will be a Chamber Singers concert at the University of Southern Maine – contact Armand Messier at BFA St. A if you want to be involved.
- Our new webmaster is Armand Messier and our new website, which is up, is www.vmeal.org

Old Business

September meeting minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

Beginning balance of \$1809.89.

Ending balance before festival \$1647.83.

- There was some concern that we can barely cover what we'll be spending on honorariums and piano moving fee with gate fees.
- Eric would like to reimburse John Gordon for mileage for moving percussion.
- Concern over expenses of ordering choral music for more students than we end up having in the chorus. Marilyn said the conductor was asked to pick two pieces from the library to save money, which they did. She suggested that for rehearsal purposes in schools, get a copy for every 2 students and make photocopies, so that we end up with the appropriate number of originals.
- Donna sent the bills for the missing music. It was suggested that bills be paid before you are allowed to come to a Festival. Gisele says she is not willing, nor is her school willing, to pay for losses of music that were from a previous teacher especially when there is no record.
- Discussion of returning unneeded music to the company. Donna said you can't return anything.

- Eric suggested another money-saving tip of asking conductors to bring some of their own pieces, which he did with this year's wind ensemble.
- ***Mary moved that we table the discussion until our June meeting to get ready for next year. Gisele seconded. Motion passed.***

Spring Meetings:

- Andy asked if we should meet at the May festival and also in June? Gisele suggested that the June meeting could be used to get ready for next year. We can save the bigger issues for June.
- Patti suggested that we get the agenda farther in advance so we could give the issues some thought and be prepared.
- Caleb suggested that at the May Festival meeting we set the agenda for the June meeting.

February 8/9 Festival Reports

MS Choral manager Marilyn Sink:

- chorus was anticipated to be much bigger. It is under 60. The list changes a lot by the time we start the festival.
- There has been a problem with communication in organizing the ensemble. People don't always respond to email. She wonders how to get people to respond in a timely manner.
- The test for MS students being able to handle this typically HS schedule is their endurance at the concert.
 - It was asked why the number fluctuates. Marilyn responded that there were all sorts of reasons and they deal with it.
 - Caleb suggested that it is because they aren't auditioned and may not be as vested as they should be
 - Jess said she didn't bring her students because they would be getting home too late.
 - It was suggested that sports gets kids home late.
 - Gisele didn't want to have to do the variegated schedule with supervising both age groups, and when the schedule changed she felt it was too late. She said we should be thinking through this process in June.

Wind Ensemble Manager Eric Bushey:

- conductor not feeling well but hopefully will make it.

Concert Band Manager Jessica LaRocque

- Doug is being very patient.
- there should be a cutoff for very low scores
 - Mary: if they can't play, they shouldn't be in the festival
 - Eric: maybe there should be a note on the prepared piece to communicate the expectation or cut-off score info to students
 - Bruce: maybe the concert band conductor should come from the District so as not to put a guest conductor through working with these students
 - Andy: still need a cut-off even if we do that
 - Betzi: we have discussed this before and think we are ready for a motion.
 - Eric: we should figure out a way to include special needs students who have prepared well.

- Peter: there could be a student that is brilliant but has trouble with music, and works very hard to overcome this. There needs to be a policy that states the expectations to these students objectively
- Eric: we need an actual number for the cut-off
- Betzi: what if teachers petition the manager ahead of time if they have a special needs student they feel should be included. That way there is an objective way of excluding unprepared students but allowing teachers to advocate for students that put forth a lot of effort but might not get a very high score.
- Patty: proposes that when students apply to audition, that on the registration form, there is a way for teachers to rate the students' effort
- People discussed this but concluded it isn't objective enough.
- Gisele: helps students along the way during the preparation for auditions. There are no excuses for unpreparedness.
- What if manager contacts teachers of the low scores to find out what the situation is?
- This was discussed and it was concluded that we need to stop accepting low scores unless there are special circumstances.
- ***Eric: moves that we have a cut-off score and develop a procedure for teachers to advocate for their students. Andy seconded. Motion passed.***

- Jess also suggested that we revise the percussion audition form so the student can note their strengths for instruments, i.e. timpani. People agreed and Jess volunteered to make the revision.

Conductors for May Festival

-HS Chorus: Dan Boomhower. Manager – Pillsbury/Messier

-MS Bands: 8th grade? Ask if Aron will do it. Need to find conductor. 6/7 Manager Phil. Conductor?

-Andy will manage jazz band. Make recommendations for students to him. Potentially Cam Cross from Johnson can conduct.

- Conductor contract: Caleb – should we give conductors a contract?

- Eric: when they're from outside the District, yes.
- We all agreed to use a contract and to look at the VMEA website to get a contract, since other Districts use contracts and we don't want to reinvent the wheel.

- the honorarium for conductors is \$350.00

May Festival Schedule etc.

-Caleb: The festival really is May 3rd and 4th, Thursday and Friday. The idea was to use the same schedule as the February Festival. Is this going to work with Middle School being out late on Thursday night?

- there was quite a bit of discussion over what people thought the dates were. Several people have already communicated that it is the Friday/Saturday 4th/5th to their students, parents, and bus companies.
- we did decide the Thurs/Friday 3/4 according to last meeting minutes. Andy already booked those dates to host it at Enosburg.
- Mary: is middle school being out late that big of a problem?
- Jess: it is at my school.

- Gisele: there are cultural differences with that at different schools.
- Caleb: could we have an overlapping schedule?
- Gisele: doesn't work for people that have to bus and deal with both age groups
- Gisele listed people at the meeting that taught MS band and what they perceived the dates to be. Caleb and she will call the other teachers who aren't there and find out what people planned on and what problems exist for each situation. Will do the 3rd and 4th if people can switch dates.
- Andy will check the availability of Saturday at Enosburg.

-Enosburg needs/concerns: Change of date possibility. Need choral risers and will talk to Armand about it.

-Participants/#'s deadline: 16th.

- Caleb says Dan has made CD's already for rehearsal. He will notify the choir deadline.
- Participants of Bands to Caleb tonight or directly to Phil and Aron by the 16th.

Other Business

-the choral library will be moved from Enosburg to St. Albans Town during the May festival. Jess may be able to get a truck. Bruce offered to help.

-Procedure for returning choral music and penalties: in order to ensure music is returned, should it be collected as kids leave stage?

- Donna: the teachers need to collect it so they can keep track of which students didn't return their music.
- Gisele: People should just be responsible.

-Jazz Band will be held at the May festival.

Spring meetings

-during May festival. At this time we will set the agenda for the June meeting.

-June meeting to get ready for next year: Friday June 8th, 5:30 PM at Mary Bauer's house in Jericho (? Near MMU – Mary, can you send directions?)

Respectfully submitted,
Betzi Irwin