**WMSOA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – DECEMBER 7, 2013 – 9:00AM**

**Grandville High School**

WMSOA President Doug Turkstra called the WMSOA Annual General Meeting to order at 9:00AM and welcomed everyone in attendance. Seventy-four members signed in. Most members had arrived earlier to pay annual WMSOA and/or NISOA dues and appropriate game fees and other charges, as well as to partake of the donuts, bagels, and drinks provided for the meeting. Doug thanked Tom Walters for arranging for our meeting room and all members for their flexibility with game assignment changes. He also asked the association to recognize those members who officiated regional tournament games and beyond.

**Secretary’s Report** - Larry Olsen

Larry stated that he sent out sixteen email communications to members this year. These messages included information about Association meetings and attachments with copies of meeting minutes, overtime procedures for the high school conferences for which WMSOA assigns, various MHSAA rules and policy documents, and other items of general interest. It was also noted that our primary assignor, Greg Pilbeam, sent a number of other messages with reminders about game schedule and Arbiter issues and reminders about meetings. He noted, as well, that we currently have 193 names on our Arbiter roster of officials, though several of those are “Not Ready” to accept game assignments by their own wishes.

**Treasurer’s Report** - Bob Powers

At this time the Association has a bank balance of $13,789.09, with revenue coming in over the past year of $30,693 and expenses of $30,437. The Association is in good financial position and has the opportunity to look into putting more money toward referee training activities, such as observations of officials working games. He also reminded everyone that NISOA dues for members working college games must be received by December 15, so WMSOA can send a single check to NISOA to pay them. Payments received after date will need to include a “late payment” fee.

**Assignors’ Report** -Keith Miller

Keith gave the over-all Assignors’ report, in Greg Pilbeam’s absence, repeating their thanks to the members for helping to cover all the games in our area, considering all the changes, additions, or adjustments made to game schedules during the year. Greg, Bill Wagner, and Matt Koekkoek assigned for a total of 2208 high school and college games, filling 5004 positions. Even so, there was 1 spring game and 3 fall games not covered because we had no available officials for them. The number of games and number of changes point to the need for all to update schedules in Arbiter regularly, blocking out those times when you are not available, which helps avoid time-wasting turn-backs. Also be sure your personal information is current so assignors, partners, and schools can contact you easily if there is a need to do so.

We continued to have issues with Arbiter based on the efforts of MHSAA to use Arbiter as a “full-service” system for both assignors and schools tracking officiating assignments and game schedules. Some schools made changes to games that were not easily apparent to assignors and officials, which caused some issues, including situations where more officials showed up for games than necessary or assignors had to scramble at the last minute to find members available to cover games. WMSOA will go back to using its own separate Arbiter account next year, which should help us avoid many of these issues.

Keith also mentioned that the various conference commissioners expressed their thanks to all of our members for their efforts to keep games safe and under control. They appreciate the work that we do and the level of commitment that our members show.

Please note that if games are postponed and rescheduled, the assignors try to put the original crew on the rescheduled game if they are available, or to find another game assignment to take its place. Unfortunately, when there are large numbers of postponed or cancelled games, such as we experienced last spring, it is not always possible to replace games that were originally assigned.

NISOA officials are again required to submit a “background check” statement on NISOA Policy Form 900.371. The necessary document, called the “Member Re-Registration Statement (Nov 2013)” is available in the “Chapter/Other” section of the “Forms” page at the nisoa.com website. You cannot be properly registered with NISOA without it. Please print out or download the form, complete and sign it, and send it to Keith Miller either as a scanned document in an email or by regular mail as soon as possible. Please put “WMSOA” in the space designated for “Chapter” on the form.

**Ethics Committee Report** – Mark Lundvick

Mark commented that use of social media remains an area that requires care. The things we are seeing appear to be more controlled and mature, but still be very careful what you post and communicate through any kind of social media.

He reminded everyone to maintain a high level of professionalism, not only at games, but also any time you are in a public situation. We are all under more scrutiny than ever. Watch what you do everywhere and keep your conversations and private comments with your crewmates among yourselves. Assignors are now getting more questions about referee decisions and receiving more videos to review. Don’t let yourself be the subject of them.

During your games, keep your focus on what is happening on the field. If spectators are causing problems, get the game administrator to deal with them. You need to take care of the players and bench personnel, though you can suspend or terminate a game if spectator issues are not dealt with. Something like the “gun” issue at a WMSOA-assigned game this fall needs to be handled by the school’s representative. In that situation, where a spectator was legally “open-carrying” a gun at the game, the school asked him to remove it; but after he did, one of the coaches still was concerned for the safety of his team and decided to take his team out of the game. A news report from a local gun rally the next day broadened the scope of this issue when the incident at the game was included in the discussion. This illustrates the need to know who the school’s game administrator is at each game and how to reach him or her quickly when needed.

**President’s Report** – Doug Turkstra

Doug spoke about the By Law change proposal put together by several of our board and association members and scheduled for a vote later in the meeting. He also mentioned that WMSOA now assigns officials for 70 high schools, which is the largest number handled by an officials’ association in the state. We still need more officials to cover high school games, especially for the northern part of the lakeshore area. Members were asked to encourage any qualified referees they may know to consider becoming MHSAA and WMSOA officials. Ask them to check out our website for information and to find our application form. Members can also let the board know about any potential new officials.

This year was the third of a four-year commitment from our high schools for pay rates for games. Greg Pilbeam and John Crumb, our liaisons to the OK Conference, will begin a process to review our pay rates and put together a proposal to take to the conferences to update the rate structure when it expires.

**By-Law Change Proposal** – Jeff Kirchhoff and Duncan Purvis

Jeff began the discussion of the By-Law change proposal by presenting a recap of the thinking behind and the process of putting together the suggested changes. The updates deal primarily with the terms and the election schedule for our board and member-at-large positions, with the intent to provide more continuity to the board as a whole. In the present format, it would be possible to have as many as five new board members elected at the same time. With a membership roster of nearly 200, the ongoing communication we need to maintain with schools, conferences, the MHSAA and NISOA, as well as other assignors and officials’ groups, and the planning necessary to carry out our meeting and training activities, the board felt the challenges of bringing that many new people up to speed on board responsibilities would be better served by making all officer position 3-year terms and having the vice-president succeed to the president’s position after his term. It also seemed wise to lengthen the member-at-large terms to 3 years and reschedule the elections for all positions to choose one officer and one member-at-large each year. Duncan expanded on these items and some of the other minor changes that were proposed, as well as on the structure of the Nomination Committee that will receive nominations for the open positions each year and speak with prospective candidates to explain the responsibilities of the positions and the level of interest they have in them.

Discussion of the proposal followed, with several members asking further questions and offering opinions on various aspects of the proposal. A motion to amend the wording of the by-law section regarding submission of nominations was made and discussed, but it was eventually withdrawn. The question was called for a vote, and the change proposal passed handily on a written ballot.

**Board Elections** – Mark Lundvick

Mark conducted the elections for the open secretary position, to replace Larry Olsen, whose two terms have been complete, and one member-at-large position, to replace Duncan Purvis. Duncan was on the ballot unopposed for the position of secretary. Four candidates were on the ballot for the member-at-large position. Each gave a brief statement, either in person or by proxy, about his interest in the position. When the vote was taken, Duncan was elected as secretary, and Nick Balcer was elected to the member-at-large position.

**Referee and Site Review** – Tom Walters

Tom reported that he was impressed by the performances of many of the referees he observed this year, and especially with those of some of the newer referees who have joined WMSOA recently; but some of our older officials need to get back to attention to the details of job. When working a game, anticipate transitions and work to be in a better position for the next phase of play. Be sure to check the field and have a good pre-game discussion, especially if working at a new site for you or working with a new partner or crewmate. Tom thought we have done a better job dealing with coaches, but he reminded us to just “inform” coaches when cards are issued. Then move away for the restart of play, and do not discuss or debate your call.

If you are interested in having one of your games observed, contact Tom (or a board member) to try to arrange a mutually convenient date for it.

**New Business** – Doug Turkstra

Doug reported that a major goal for the board going into the new year is to improve our meeting agendas and content, so we encourage more members to attend them. We will try to find ways to do more and better training and to provide more information that we can use in managing our games. Suggestions from members as to topics for coverage at meetings or ways in which information can be better presented are always welcome. Contact any board member with your ideas.

Because MHSAA only provides us with the NFHS Rule Book in alternate years, we will also consider getting them for our membership for those years that MHSAA does not send them out.

There was a suggestion from a member that a compilation of yellow and red cards for schools be made available to our membership so we can be better aware of situations that may require an early and more focused attention to potential problems.

Paul Holwerda mentioned that he continues to work on improvements to our WMSOA website (wmsoa.org), and he welcomes suggestions for improvements or things that might be added to make it more useful. Photos of our members in action can also be sent to him. Remember to check the website regularly for information about meeting times and locations, posting of minutes, and other information about our association and its activities.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Olsen / WMSOA Secretary