

District 35 — 2015-2016

DEC Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2016

Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center
1 North Main Street
Oshkosh, WI 54901



Meeting called to order at 9:32 a.m. by District Director Rhonda Williams.

Attendance:

Rhonda Williams
Cindy Laatsch
Keith Cumiskey
Ed Thelen
Sue Kohut
Craig Carpenter
Laura Croft

Vince Treague
Bruce Bitter
Maria Armbrust
Julia Boss
Yvonne Lumsden-Dill
Jay Kieckhafer
Jaki Van Valin

Scott Kazin
Lois TeStrake
Ranee Graf
Irv Snider
Fred Debelack
Cindy Algiers
Theresa Flynn

Guests:

Kathleen Rader – Club Coach Chair
Ann Pacheco

21 members and 3 guests in attendance

19 members needed for a quorum – a quorum is present

-A printed agenda was provided at the start of the meeting.

Club Mission – District Director Rhonda Williams

After reading the mission of a Toastmasters club, District Director Rhonda Williams discussed how we need to continue to grow membership. There is currently no club in Oshkosh. With a population of 66,000 the city should be able to support multiple clubs.

Rhonda told everyone a story about some brooding hens she had, where she kept waiting and watching the eggs but they didn't hatch, proving the old adage, "You can't count your chickens until they've hatched." Rhonda showed us the list of clubs the District was concerned about. If we lose that many clubs there's no way we can be a Distinguished District. Program Quality Director Cindy Laatsch asked what we should do to improve membership. Club Growth Director Keith Cumiskey suggested to call Club Presidents for all clubs and not to rely on e-mail. This message was seconded by Area N1 Director Lois TeStrake. Each Area Director needs to see when their clubs meet and follow up so they can get dues timely and ask the specific questions such as "How many members have paid?" Area C2 Director Laura Croft suggested creating and using a phone tree. The rest of the year will be easy if we get some of the current clubs at charter strength. Cindy Laatsch indicated that we are never taught the results such as submit educational awards and that we need to remind people of the benefits of Toastmasters and give them a value proposition. Cindy provided the example of Southwest Toastmasters where they are using the Square to collect payments and challenged the group with the following question - "Are we thinking modern?" Rhonda asked Metro Division Director Julia Boss to briefly talk about Venmo (venmo.com) which was discussed 1st DEC meeting of the year.

120 clubs paid in October. So far, 35 clubs have paid dues for eight members, With respect to Distinguished Clubs, 27 clubs have 20 or more members and 5 or more goals. Many clubs either have the requisite goals and not enough membership or vice versa. We ratchet up as members ratchet down. We are heading in the right way. A final reminder was given to reach out to the clubs.

Club Coaching – Club Coach Chair Kathleen Rader

Kathleen presented to us an amazing opportunity to help strengthen clubs through the Club Coach program. However, the District needs to rework the program; it was announced it a few years ago, started with the generic brochure that provides a good overview of the club coaching program.

Kathleen has spent time trying to get the word out about the club coaching program by reach out to Area Directors. A negative perception of "We suck!" persists with respect to the program. This perception was affecting the selling of the Club Coach program. The District has provided examples where the coaches knew what to do, but there didn't appear to be much support behind the coaches. 37 clubs are eligible for coaches.

We currently have 14 coaches for 10 clubs. 1 club has requested a coach, but haven't found one yet. It is important to find the right fit, from a personality fit, to ensure the success of a Coach and the corresponding club. In addition, nobody knows much about the program. Every club that needs a club coach should have one. There should be two Coaches if possible, as Coaches need to attend meetings and sometimes personal matters need to be taken care of.

As a District, we need to support coaches, provide guidance, reward and recognize during the process. Kathleen and Keith would like to rework the program. One of the first steps would be to create a toolkit that will provide additional material to support TI materials. This should give them a step by step guide; Keith has been collecting information from other Districts. Another step would be to give the clubs a copy of the Successful Club Series module, Moments of Truth, and have the clubs work through a Moments of Truth session. The clubs would also be provided Area, Division and District leader contacts list so they can connect with those individuals as needed. A club roster will be given to the coaches so they know whom they're working with to get where they've been and where they can go. Kathleen also would like to return to the monthly Club Coach call that has been conducted in the past, but to change the agenda for the call so that the focus is on most common problems and see how as a group was they can correct those issues. Finally, the District will provide video resources for quick learning/looking.

Kathleen believes Coaches would be more willing to participate if we acknowledge the coaches are making progress including newsletter announcements of coaching appointments. There should also be intermediate rewards from Coaching Chair if you meet goal based upon predetermined milestones. There may also be recognition at a luncheon at the District Conference/Convention. The District also should sell the Coach program as a leadership opportunity as it satisfies requirements for the ALS award which leads to a DTM award.

We can restore clubs on list back to health if we help them remember why they started this journey. Kathleen needs help from the District as Coaches are needed in all Areas. We should all try and find someone close to the appropriate awards and talk this up. We also need to create a Club Coach troubleshooting guide and use these to evaluate clubs that could use a coach. This may present itself to be useful outside just the club coaching program. For create our own video library, we need individuals good at recording and editing videos. The current system is not helpful or productive. Kathleen wants to address items that appear more difficult than they appear on the surface; brainstorming will help with this. We want to make sure coaches are supported. How can we do it better?

Area C2 Director Laura Croft provided the example of the Madison Achievers where she challenged the club to make changes to improve as they were a struggling club. She met resistance with questions such as "What do you mean it's going to cost \$\$\$ for a better venue?" The club found a free venue for 15. Many times the club needs a support person besides the Coach.

Area E3 Director Maria Armburst asked if we should have projects like the CC and CL manuals for the coaches. Is this a possibility? The manual should be something other than "Here's all these goals? Let's fix them all." We need to change the mindset to more gentle one.

Area M5 Director Scott Kazin commented that for the video library it might be good to have a video for the club members to learn more about the Coaching program. Area E1 Director Bruce Bitter asked if there will be something at the Conference/Convention so people can learn more about the program. The Trio commented that this was done in the fall with minimal interest/response. Kathleen offered the suggestion to do facetime during parts of the year and Area S4 Director Theresa Flynn suggested Division speech contests as a good time for Coaches to meet and collaborate. Eastern Director Vince Treague suggested for all of the Club Presidents to come to the DEC meeting and inform them about the Club Coaching program and thought many would attend.

Area N2 Director Ranee Graf commented that the expectation is for the Coach to join the club and with the dues increase this may make it more difficult. Kathleen indicated that there should be no expectation of this.

Program Quality Director Cindy Laatsch also mentioned the possibility of a Coaches roundtable; as those thinking about Coaching feel they need to know everything, but in reality should be learning while the club is learning. The District is looking into purchasing the ability for 100 person WebExs which can be used as an additional tool, use Area and Division Council meetings to have meetings with Presidents.

Budget – Finance Manager Sue Kohut – see sheet for numbers

Sue provided a high level summary of our District finances through February 2016. She provided a little additional commentary behind a few of the numbers. TI sets projected revenue for the year based upon last year. The District is ahead of budget on a membership partially due to clubs getting dues in timely. The District received \$450 of conference revenue from ads in the Fall Conference program. The TLI revenue was from lunches purchased at the District wide TLI held in January. TLI expenses are from both District and Division expenses. Some expenses not always spent when planned. Marketing expenses include the following items: new club banners, Art of Evaluation packets, Club Coaching expenses, and incentive programs such as Distinguished by December and Moments of Truth. Education & Training expenses are for training at DEC meetings. The District works hard to keep administrative expenses at a minimum. Travel is limited to 30% of entire budget and is not evenly distributed throughout the year. Area Director travel is at budget. Sue gave kudos

to Bruce Bitter for submitting vouchers within 24 hours of club visits. Timeliness is helpful. **Add year to date numbers to report.**

Meetup – Area C2 Director Laura Croft

Laura started using Meetup as part of moving a venue for a club and meeting a challenge for a PR contest set up by District Public Relations Manager Barb Weisenberger. She started up small because in order to keep costs down the Meetup group needed to be fewer than 50 members. There were 4 visitors at the next club meeting after the Meetup was set up. Laura then started letting other clubs know about the Meetup.

Believing that wisdom and experience will beat out enthusiasm every time has become an old myth. Networking is also important. In prior networking models, you needed to know that one person that knows everyone. However according to the Harvard Business Review this is not what we need. We need to know one person who knows another person who knows another person.

40% of Toastmasters will be leaving within a year. Laura has been following the Rule of 500 and attempted to reach out to all of these people.

Laura showed her Meetup page with us to demonstrate the various groups she has found on Meetup. You can see a calendar of events once you join the various groups. You get to see how many people are attending the events. Laura created a handout to support the Division with a QR code that can be scanned. Laura reminded the group that this was a good opportunity to obtain CL manual credit for creating special events using Meetup.com.

You also can receive e-mail reminders. You can RSVP in your e-mail to upcoming events. You can load contacts into your e-mail. You can post comments about an event.

Laura showed a slide with the pricing options for Meetup. Her club used the basic membership, but had to keep deleting people. They then upgraded to the unlimited package which could be used beyond one club. People can thank you for coming to an event (LOL was shown as an example). You can also pay club dues to Meetup. LOL does Comedy show. You may need to ask for donations. Laura has gained additional contacts from meetups to subsidize costs. The biggest benefit of Meetup is that it allows you to reach out to others that you know.

Area E1 Director Bruce Bitter asked “How does this work for smaller communities?” District Director Rhonda Williams responded that the Menomonie Club uses Meetup and you can see Meetup group when using Google to search for the club and use the Meetup to direct traffic to the club website and find members.

Laura mentioned you may get special permission to join events; she provided an example of a Wednesday night program to join the Madison group.

Area S4 Director Theresa Flynn told the group that Meetup uses Google spiders; Meetup results will pop up higher on Google searches for people Googling in Toastmasters as a search engine priority.

Program Quality Director Cindy Laatsch discussed big data where the cloud is freeing us up from servers in data centers. She provided the example of a House of Cards group setup on Monday, on Wednesday 9 people attended, 2 joined. You need to trust people and step into new worlds.

Area M1 Director Yvonne Lumsden-Dill provided the example of the Ozaukee Club that setup a Meetup when it was down to 5 members; at the next meeting 7 people walked through the door, 2 people joined the club. 50% of the club is young professionals. It is important to tap into people with different mindsets.

Area N2 Director Ranee Graf provided information about Facebook Live! where you can record and add a meeting and post to personal pages. After posting, anybody can come across it and watch.

Meetup might be good for new member orientation where you can follow Kathy Shine's example. People have joined Toastmasters to want a bigger life.

Laura concluded by saying that Meetup is the match and Toastmasters is the kindling. The fire is each person you meet.

Eastern Division Director Vince Treague asked if there was something the District could fund. Rhonda indicated you could search within a 25 mile radius and can hold 2 additional meetups when you pay for the premium membership where we can draw circles and then have Division Governors view circles. Rhonda indicated the Trio could work on a plan.

Theresa believes using larger groups will allow a greater number of clubs that benefit. Club Growth Director Keith Cumiskey will work with Laura on a plan for Meetup. Yvonne indicated that pricing is different in different areas.

District Procedures Manual – Club Growth Director Keith Cumiskey

Keith informed the DEC that there have been recent efforts to update the District Procedures Manual. The manual was reviewed by a committee consisting of Keith, Area S4 Director Theresa Flynn, Past District Governor Mike Zelm and Nate Otto. The last District Procedures manual is from 2008. The committee found many things that conflict with Toastmasters International procedures. Items that will be removed from the manual include anything extraneous. The manual will contain procedures that are not specifically called out by TI; for example the role of the Parliamentarian. There are 20 sections in the manual; some of the sections revolve around District roles. Keith divided the sections amongst the committee. Within the next week the committee will get sections into a 1st draft. There are two individuals as reviewers – Nancy McCulley and Tom Rozga. Nancy and Tom will

provide feedback and then the manual will be shared with the DEC. The District Council will need to review and approve; at the Convention. Keith reminded the group that we are leaving a legacy. We do not want individuals to be clueless when coming into a particular position.

Low Member Club Report – District Director Rhonda Williams

We went through the list of clubs put on the “danger” list at the February DEC meeting as well as some additional clubs of concern.

Madison Achievers –Area C2 Director Laura Croft indicated there are 9 paid members but they have to be officially processed through the Toastmasters website.

UWSP – Area N2 Director Ranee Graf says 5 members are in according to the Toastmasters website. Because of Spring Break they suspended their next meeting. For this club, the university paid half of students’ dues.

Club Growth Director Keith Cumiskey reminded the group of extra efforts needed to get corporate clubs to pay the spring dues for members.

Prairie Swale – Laura provided information that the club finished up Speechcraft that had 6 members, of those members 3-4 filled out a Toastmaster application. The successful speechcraft was due to the efforts of former Area Governor Gus Vander Wegen and a new member out of Capital City.

TM 35 Leadership Club – Administration Manager Ed Thelen indicated the club would have 8 members renewing.

Summit Seekers – Laura indicated Central Division Director Nancy McCulley is working with the club to get 8 members and should have 11 members.

Smokey’s Sensation – Area M2 Director Jay Kieckhafer indicated 7 members were paid. In addition, there used to be issues with Forest Service paying members’ dues, but now the club has started asking earlier for them.

Spectacle City – A couple District officers said this club was going up in membership.

Walworth County – Club Growth Director Keith Cumiskey is working with this club to keep them as a club in good standing.

Assurant – This club is dead due to drastic changes in the work environment at Assurant.

Marq Our Words – This club had 11 membership applications in one night.

Profesionales Bilingues – Program Quality Director Cindy Laatsch indicated this club is dead as members of this club are coming to Southwest Club to join.

Wausau Morning – Area N1 Director Lois TeStrake indicated this club would have enough members.

Church Mutual – Lois indicated this club had 7 members and are thinking of renaming the club.

Marshfield –This club has 11 members.

Rasumussen – No one has heard back regarding the status of this club, but under Past District Governor Dick Hawley’s leadership this club should be in good shape as he is a pit bull in getting members into the club.

Organically Speaking and Team SP – Area S2 Director Fred Debelack indicated these two clubs would merge into one club.

Belle City and Racine – Area S3 Director Cindy Algiers indicated these two clubs will be merging as there are 12 members between two clubs. The Racine charter will be kept and the Belle City charter will be surrendered.

Kenosha – This club has recently moved to a library. At a recent club meeting there were 15 guests. There will be follow up to see if the guests actually joined the club.

Rock Solid – Cindy L. indicated this club has 9 members, but only 3 members plan on renewing their dues. Steps taken to help this club increase guest traffic include contacting ex-Club Coach and Club Sponsor to see if they can assist. Caterpillar went through a downsizing where the Oak Creek plant closed and South Milwaukee has all operations.

Leaving a Legacy – Program Quality Director Cindy Laatsch

Cindy asked “What is a legacy?” It is what’s left when you’re dead. She provided the example of Vince Lombardi and his legacy. Depending on what legacy you leave there can be both goodness and badness. Your heritage is part of your legacy and is what you’re proud of.

District Director Rhonda Williams reminded everyone that “It’s only March.” while Cindy counterpointed with “Oh my God, it’s March!” You don’t want people to say when you’re gone “Who was that?” or “What do you wish you knew now?”

Area S3 Director Cindy Algiers indicated she would take away information about Meetup to enhance her legacy.

Cindy L. challenged us to think about the following question, “What am I going to do to let the next person be able to do the job?” Some Districts have individuals who just “dump and run” once the new Toastmasters year begins. We should be mentoring the people that are coming into our legacy. We need to think about “What can I do for the people that follow me?” We start out with an empty slate, but can share plans to leave a good legacy.

Cindy L. wants all of us to leave a legacy. Our time is going to be over in a heartbeat.

District Realignment – Metro Division Director Julia Boss for District Realignment Chair David Simono

Julia asked how many of us remember District realignments. How many would like things to be more stable?

Julia suggested that specific questions be directed to District Realignment Chair Dave Simono. The current presentation is not final and Julia asked everyone to keep an open mind.

The realignment plan takes into consideration the following factors: new clubs, closing clubs, downward trending clubs and current alignment configuration. Based upon these criteria, the following items were noted for each Division:

Central: Balancing clubs

Eastern: No changes

Northern; Change Areas N1 and N2

Western: Balancing clubs

Metro & Southeast – Room for growth with additional Divisions

Area S4 Director Theresa Flynn indicated the reason for the more drastic changes for Metro and Southeast was due to restrictions on the number of clubs for Areas and the number of Areas in a Division.

For Metro & Southeast Divisions, the goal is to eliminate geographic confusion for Metro & Southeast, create room for Area & Club growth, enable more District support for clubs, simplify the role of Division Director for these Divisions by making them more manageable (less Area Directors to support), simplify the role of Area Director to provide greater value to clubs and more opportunities for leadership (Division Directors, Area Directors and Deputy Directors).

There will be a split from 2 to 4 Divisions, aligned by geographic location, in order to seek a balance to optimize club success which will help with Club coaching

For the Divisions that need to be more balanced currently there is the most opportunity for Central Division.

The new realignment should make things easier to track and allow more one on one conversations with individuals.

Southeast Division Director Irv Snider asked how actual clubs for the Divisions were determined. Julia indicated that Dave has the list that he will share so Division Directors Julia & Irv can provide appropriate input.

Club Coach Chair Kathleen Rader asked whether or not we will have enough individuals for District roles. Julia responded that there have been complaints from Area Directors with 6 clubs, and the realignment will allow greater opportunity for seeing things that will work

Irv Snider asked another question as to whether or not we will vote on at the Convention and the realignment becomes effective 7/1. Julia responded affirmatively to both questions; there will be two months to put this plan in place. District Director Rhonda Williams indicated that as for voting for additional Division Directors nominations can be taken from the floor. In addition, there will not be a lot of additional Area Directors and there will be a good balance of Directors. Julia indicated Dave has done a lot of homework and received many different opinions. Irv finally asked - What do we name the new Divisions? Rhonda Williams indicated we only need to name them with different letters.

Craig provided kudos to Dave by saying this was the best District realignment plan he had ever seen presented. Julia reemphasized the fact that Dave saw the need for long term prospects early.

Area E3 Director Maria Armbrust suggested we provide video testimonials that will encourage others to become District leaders and obtain names of Toastmasters that will support the leader.

The DEC Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Thelen

Ed Thelen, DTM
District Administration Manager