**RRTA Meeting**

**November 1, 2018**

**Attendance:**  R. Allen, D. Altobelli, K. Barkley, M. Barnum, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, K. Fager, M. Ferenchak, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, B. Jones, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, A. Smith, D. Sullivan, B. Swan, F. Valente, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

**Absent:** Z. Artson-Crichlow,K. Evans,A. Johnson, J. Ivanick, A. Johnson, M. Keating, F. Macek, S. Silvio, G. Sweeney,

**Also in attendance**: B. Gerace, M. Ludwig, S. Raymond,

The meeting was called to order at 10:03.

1. A moment of silence was held for those who died in Pittsburgh and Kentucky.

2. The October, 2018 minutes were approved as written.

3. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Rae I. Fleisher, Elaine K. Scalzo, and William E. Silverstein. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

4. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli reported that there was a second new teacher orientation of about 80 to 90 new teachers the previous week. There was a union presence with Debbi Jackett explaining professional development offered by RTA, Aimee Rinere was asking new hires to sign up to RTA and he was able to sign up 9 new teachers to become new Vote Cope contributors.

A letter was sent out to retirees from NYSUT to increase their contributions. If you choose to do so, return the letter to RTA, not to Albany, so they can register it before forwarding it to Albany. Some reps spoke about feeling that the letter was offensive for those who are generous or who had already increased their contribution this year. With computers today it was felt that NYSUT should be able to target those who haven’t raised their contribution recently.

5. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Sue Raymond reported that in October they made 31 dresses and 9 dolls. In November they will be preparing items to raffle at the Holiday Party. A group went to a halfway house to help women going back into society learn to sew. They will be providing a sewing machine to the house.

6. **Holiday Party** — Please get your checks into RRTA by November 14.

7. **Books for Kids** — The group will be going to School 7 on November 20 at 10 am.

8. Adam Urbanski came to the meeting welcoming the RRTA rep group and thanking them for their service. He also said that the Dress A Girl and Books for Kids are flagship examples of good work done by the retirees.

He then explained that RTA will soon be going into negotiations with the new superintendent who probably will be an interim superintendent until June when the search will be completed. There will be a push for give backs because there is a significant deficit and the present superintendent depleted all the reserve funds. Urbanski said that the first thing they try is to eliminate is health benefits for retirees, but he said he will fight for them because they are a human right.

He then discussed the problems with the School Board with infighting and disfunction. The governor is talking about mayoral control or a state takeover as mentioned in the D&C. Urbanski said that RTA has a good working relationship with the mayor at the moment.

With a strong union, 97% recommitted to stay with the union, the teachers will be strong and persist.

The report from Jaime Aquino, the distinguished educator assigned by the NYSED commissioner, is overdue. It has been submitted to the commissioner who may amend it. Urbanski said that it may say that the RTA contract is too rich as a criticism but that administrators don’t utilize it (ie lead teacher usage).

If the district goes to state receivership the contract becomes void and a new one must be negotiated with whomever gets the receivership. If this happens retiree benefits will be in jeopardy.

There was a comment about having a counter report prepared to show how the union has good points in the contract that can help the district that the administrators and Central Office ignore such as professional development opportunities. Urbanski said that they are working on improving relationships with the Board and Central Office.

9. **Elections** — Mary Barnum distributed who NYSUT and RTA endorse for the November 6 elections. A mailing went out from RRTA to dues paying members.

N.B. Joe Morelle is on the ballot twice and must be marked twice, once for the 2 year term and once to finish Louise Slaughter’s term.

10. **Health Insurance** — A letter went out from CO to all retirees about the “under 65” by mistake and a new letter for the “over 65” will be sent out. Excellus Blue Cross/Blue Shield Advantage Plan will be reduced to $58.50 (a significant drop to make up for the overcharge from last year); The EPO price will be $431.84 (+7%); MVP Buy Up Plan is now open to all and will be $130.02; and the MVP Gold Standard will be $45.48.

The Informational Meeting is November 8 at East High School Auditorium from 3:30 to 5:30. All the insurance representatives will be there to answer questions after their initial presentations. They will have the forms you need to fill out if changing plans or you can get them from the Benefit Office at CO.

11. **Cost of Living increase** — COLA for your pension occurs after 5 years of being retired and age 62 (prorated after your birthday). It become cumulative from year to year (thanks to Vote Cope’s work). It is based on the first $18,000.

12. **Newspaper** — The November RRTA newspaper is at the presses and November 14 at 11 am will be prepared for mailing. Mary Barnum asked for people to come and help with the mailing because the November newspaper goes to all retirees.

The deadline for the January paper is December 11. She asks everyone to take pictures at the Holiday party and send them to her so she can choose among those sent for the paper.

13. **Calendar** — Mary Barnum asked for specific dates for the Dress A Girl Committee. It is the last Monday of the month, but there are some months they do not meet.

14. Carol Bonsignore Kitchen reported that on October 30 they had a great trip to Joe Rizzo’s Apple Farm. He explained his farm, grafting different varieties, the bee keeper; they had apple tasting, cider donuts and lunch by a bonfire. They were at the apple farm for 1 1/2 to 2 hours and will offer the tour again next year.

15. Al Smith spoke about the renovations to the War Memorial with the new banners from the Veteran’s Council. There are also new kiosks. Also there are new veteran flags on Congress Avenue in the 19th Ward.

Al is asking anyone with information about Rochestarians who participated in the WASPs, the female fliers who delivered and moved planes during WWII. His group is preparing a plaque and would like to include all local female names. Contact him if you know of anyone who served in this capacity.

Sunday, November 11 at 9:30 there will be a ceremony at the War Memorial atrium to honor the veterans.

16. Change your batteries in smoke detectors and CO2 detectors with the change of clocks during the November 3 weekend. It is recommended to have a smoke detector in every bedroom.

17. Kevin Fager is looking into having an RTA/RRTA movie night at the Cinema Theater to help patronize a local business.

The meeting adjourned at 11:25.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary