

**RRTA Meeting
March 7, 2019**

Attendance: Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, P. Brody, K. Fager, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, B. Jones, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, B. Swan, F. Valente, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

Absent: R. Allen, D. Altobelli, K. Barkley, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, K. Evans, M. Ferenchak, A. Johnson, M. Keating, F. Macek, L. Rapkin, D. Sullivan, G. Sweeney,

Also in attendance: B. Gerace, A. Huggins, MJ Whalen

The meeting was called to order at 10:07.

1. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: June Ivanick (past RRTA vice chair and RRTA rep), Jack Donovan, Roberta Miller, and Robert Hunter. A \$25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.
2. Charlie Dean has been ill and Gaya Shakes, the vice chair, led the meeting.
3. The February 7, 2019 minutes were approved as amended for typos.
4. **Vote Cope** — The drive begins in April. There will be a mailing to retirees in April and Mary Barnum is asking Dave Altobelli to include a trifold with the legislators' addresses and phone numbers to contact them for issues such as being anti mayoral control.
5. **Dress A Girl** — Gaya reported that the group did not meet in February because the RTA office was closed because of a snow day.
6. **Books for Kids** — Mary Barnum said the committee has over \$7,000 to purchase the first graders' books. The group is going to School 15 on March 15th.
7. **Newspaper** — The due date for articles and pictures is April 12. The newspaper will include the Vote Cope appeal, information about the Shaw plays, spring picnic information, the Representative election, Pat Hart's School 12 volunteer program for September, and the baseball game sign up.
8. There is an appeal for retirees to be a School Board member. You will need 1000 signatures and live in Rochester. If you need information and help, contact the Political Action Committee chair, Candace Rubin, who is also helping Willa Powell on Saturday, March 9 to get signatures for her run. It is the practice of the RTA to endorse candidates after the Primary in June.

Sharon Silvio spoke about the NYSUT Committee of 100 which she attended. They spoke to legislators in Albany about the budget and about mayoral control. If the district goes to mayoral control or the state takes over the teacher contract could become void which will effect the retirees' health benefits.

9. **Retirement incentive** — we received an email from Adam Urbanski to say that the district would decide by the end of the week whether they will offer an incentive.

10. Randi Weingarten, AFT President attended the NYSUT district 5 & 6 meeting Wednesday, March 6, to speak to the NYSUT delegates. Several RRTA members attended and shared that she brought a positive message hoping to get more people into teaching.

They also shared that the Waltons (owners of Walmart) are donating millions of dollars into NYS for charter private schools to try to break NYS unions. Zelda Artson Crichlow said that she and Gaya attended a conference that listed the Waltons, but also Gates, Zuckerberg and many other millionaires/billionaires who are trying to privatize education.

11. Gaya Shakes reminded everyone to talk to retired friends to become RRTA members to stay up to date with benefits and issues concerning retirees.

12. **Calendar** — June 1 - The Red Wing Game and buffet; Shaw plays on September 6 and 26; Karen Huey said that she will be scheduling the Holiday Party for the second week of December.

13. Gaya Shakes suggested that there should be an article about mayoral control and how it will effect retirees, the contract and health benefits included in the RRTA newspaper.

14. Al Smith said that he is taking applications for the Air Force Teacher of the Year (for STEM teaching) by April 12. There is a \$250 check and a certificate for the winner(s). Al said that there is also an American Legion Scholarship available to High School seniors for up to \$2000. Contact Al Smith for either of these 2 applications.

Al also shared that he is reading a book "Working Women of Collar City" by Turben about women organizing labor unions in Troy, NY.

He also shared that the Upstate NY Gospel magazine has an article "Honoring the War Memorial" about the recent War Memorial plaque ceremony.

15. Mary Barnum reported the RRTA membership as 713.

16. Patti Brody shared that the recent exhibit at the Memorial Art Gallery on Frederick Douglass has 10 screens in a room and is a real work of art that showcases his life, sayings and a piece of Rochester history. It is there until early May.

The meeting adjourned at 11:06.

Mary Zimmer
RRTA Secretary