**RRTA Meeting**

**November 7, 2019**

**Attendance:**  R. Allen, D. Altobelli, Z. Artson-Crichlow, K. Barkley,M. Barnum, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, K. Evans, K. Fager,B. Gerace,K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, B. Jones, F. Macek, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, D. Sullivan, F. Valente, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer, J. Zuniga

**Absent:** M. Ferenchak,M. Keating, B. Swan

**Also in attendance**: M. Casey, M. Ludwig, S. Raymond, D. Smith, G. Sweeney

The meeting was called to order at 10:04.

1. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in past months: Armand Alesi, Polly Bradbury, Ester Fisher, Thomas Hendry, Elaine G. Lasser, Carl Mitchell, Louise Muskopf, Mary Petronio, Jean Edward Wesley, and Mary Wiggins. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

2. The October minutes were misplaced. The June minutes had omitted the results of the RRTA representative elections. All those nominated were elected for a 2 year term: Bob Allen, Katherine Barkley, Carol Bonsignore Kitchen, Kevin Fager, Robert Gerace, Willie Humphrey, Marie Jenkins-Cox, Alex Johnson, Freddi Macek, Ellen Robinson, Ken Schultz, Gaya Shakes, Sharon Silvio, Cathy Smith, Deborah Sullivan, Diana Voellinger, Mary Zimmer, and Joe Zuniga. Since there are 20 open positions, an election was not necessary and all 18 nominated are declared elected, terms ending June 30, 2021.

3. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli said that Vote Cope is in the fourth quarter. From July - September 48 new teachers became new contributors. They signed up at the new teacher orientation and there are 48 new retiree contributors. He is now working with active teacher Jason Valenti. They have proposed a challenge to reps that if they get 5 new contributors in their school giving $3 per paycheck, they will get a $50 restaurant gift certificate. Dave thanked the generous Vote Cope contribution from Al and Ruth Smith.

Dave said that for the Holiday Luncheon (December 12) he will be collecting canned and dry goods to take to a food bank. This year they will **not** collect winter clothing.

Mary Barnum reported that Paul Hippolyte from NYSUT had a phone bank for the November elections and had sent out a request. She thanked all who came to make calls.

4. **Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes reported that the group made 36 dresses, 49 dolls, and 7 blankets on the last Monday in October. They have sent 53 dresses to the Bahamas that the Action Committee packed and sent to a contact there. Dresses will also be sent to Ghana and Haiti.

Their annual fundraiser will take place at the Holiday Luncheon. They have made items to be auctioned or sold. Please come and be generous.

All are welcome to come and help the group on the last Monday of each month.

5. **Holiday Party** — The deadline to send in your money for the December 12 party at the Brook House is November 21. The form and more information is in the November RRTA newspaper. Please come and support Dress a Girl and bring a canned good for a local food cupboard.

6.  **Newspaper** — The November newspaper was mailed the day of this meeting. The deadline for the January paper is January 21. Please send in any article and/or pictures you’d like to write or share. Proofreading is February 5 and sent out on Feb. 20. The February paper will have the information about Shaw plays at Niagara on the Lake.

7. **Hurd Orchard** — Linda Rapkin reported that 55 people attended the luncheon. She thanked Bernie in the RTA office for her help. Hurd's was beautifully decorated in fall colors.

8. **Calendar** — The RRTA January meeting is January 9 (not the 2nd because the school district is still on the holiday break). The December Rep Assembly meeting has changed to December 17 at Casa Larga.

9. **Books for Kids** — The balance is over $9,000. The group goes to a first grade at School 58 on November 15 and were at RIA in October. All are welcome to join the committee to visit these schools giving first graders books for their homes.

10. Al Smith thanked School 22 for collecting from the staff over $300 for Toys for Tots, a military fundraiser. He also said that the Sunshine Day Care in Irondequoit is looking for a teacher for 3 year olds for a class of 12 students.

11.  **NYSUT/AFT elections** will be done online for the first time in January. If you don’t have an email you can request a ballot. Those who do not have an email will receive a letter asking if they are voting by email or a have a ballot sent to them.

Many concerns were brought up about this system: Two RRTA members/spouses using the same email address; how does someone not vote twice, once on line and once by ballot sent to your home; some are not familiar with computers enough to vote; if an option to come in to the RTA office to vote on one of their computers the member may be a snow bird out of town during the election period or restricted to their home.

Mary Barnum said she is trying to work with the N&E committee to make voting fair for all. She said that she has 101 members in RRTA for whom she has no email address which does not count any email that gets bounced back because the email is not working anymore.

There was a motion made that stated that Charlie Dean and Gaya Shakes will meet with the chair of the N&E committee, Karen Lahr, to discuss their concerns and answer questions that have been brought up in particular about calling for a ballot if one does not have an email. This passed.

Another motion was made that stated that if Charlie Dean and Gaya Shakes were unable to get a resolution the RRTA reps request the Karen Lahr come to meet with reps at the December meeting to explain how the election will proceed. This motion passed.

12. **Health Insurance** — all retirees should have received a letter from RCSD about price changes. There is a small increase for all plans. The informational meeting is November 14 at East High from 3:30 to 5:30.

The Basic Plan is what the RCSD pays for retirees and we pay the difference for upgraded Medicare Advantage Plans. Remember you can only have one plan. Do not take another independent plan or it voids the RCSD choice.

The RCSD is still in negotiations for a contract so medical plans have not changed for retirees. Even though RCSD’s first claims that the deficit is a result of retirees’ benefits, Urbanski and Pavone quickly pointed out the fallacy in that claim. There was a discussion on the donut hole which is now called coverage gap which eventually will be diminished to pay 25% of drug costs in the future.

13. Freddi Macek from the Labor Council said that the phone banks worked to elect most union backed candidates. She said that many Monroe County social workers and members of CSEA came and called for Bello. She thanked those who came to call.

14. Kevin Fager said that UAW workers he met at a science fair thanked teachers for their support while they were on strike.

The meeting adjourned at 11:36.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary