**RRTA Meeting**

**December 5, 2019**

**Attendance:**  R. Allen, D. Altobelli, Z. Artson-Crichlow, K. Barkley,M. Barnum, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, K. Evans, M. Ferenchak, B. Gerace,K. Huey, W. Humphrey,, B. Jones, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, B. Swan, F. Valente, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

**Absent:** C. Bonsignore-Kitchen,K. Fager,M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, M. Keating, F. Macek, D. Sullivan, J. Zuniga

**Also in attendance**: R. Boyd, M. Casey, C. Fager, S. Raymond, D. Smith, M. Weir

The meeting was called to order at 10:09.

1. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in past months: Jimmie B Lobaugh, Joseph A. Pasquarella (previous RTA president), Mike Pulio, Frank Scalese, Phillip Strauss. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

2. The November RRTA minutes were approved as written.

3. **NYSUT/AFT/NEA delegate elections** — Charlie Dean and Gaya Shakes met with Karen Lahr (chair of N & E Committee) and Debbi Jacket about the election this year that will be done through email. They got responses for the concerns that were taken at the November meeting: For 2 people with the same email, the company will send out a user name and password to each dues payer.

If an email is not returned a paper ballot will be mailed automatically to members. For those members that have not provided RRTA with email addresses (86 RRTA members), a paper ballot will be mailed. For those whose emails are returned to sender because of a change of address, the RTA office (N & E committee) will call to see if the dues payer has a new email address. If you do not, a paper ballot will be sent out.

The target deadline is January 15 and you will get 2 reminders by email before that date. Mary Barnum said that when she receives the information that the ballot notification is in everyone’s mailbox, she will send out a message to everyone on her RRTA list serve to let them know to look for it. She will remind you to look in your Spam/Junk Mail box for it, if you do not see it.

After voting for the number mentioned, don’t forget to hit **“submit”**. However, if you vote for too many, the electronic ballot will inform you of this. If you want to change your choices, you can do that before hitting submit. You can get a confirmation number if you click on the request for a confirmation number to know that your ballot was submitted successfully and will be counted.

There was a question of separating AFT from NYSUT from NEA. That hadn’t been discussed so there may be an answer for this at the Rep meeting in December.

If RTA doesn’t have your email or it has changed, let the RTA office know. Also if you have changed your address or phone number, please inform them.

If you have any questions about the process or anything about the election, you can contact Karen Lahr or Debbi Jackett (contact info on RTA website or call RTA office).

4. **Teacher Lay Offs** - John Pavone came to speak to the RRTA reps asking that we help to rally for the active teachers in front of the Board Office on December 5, but also at all rallies. There are to be 155 teachers to get pink slips which is 55% of the cuts where the administrators are only 4% of cuts. There will be higher class size and less adults in the buildings. The union is asking them to wait until June to make cuts and to wait until the legislature comes back into session in January. The Board votes on the final decision on December 19.

The rally begins at 4 pm and the speakers will begin at 6:30. Parking for rallies can be found across from CO and after 6 pm at the Credit Union.

There is a $64 million deficit from incompetence and a cover up to keep information from the City Council.

He said that the substitute budget that is being reported is inaccurate. Daily absences is only a small part of the budget when the majority of the budget is from long term subs hired to fill positions where a certified teacher could not be found in certain tenure areas, ie bilingual, ELL, etc.

Pavone said that the elementary teachers will be most effected. The union is involved to make sure that seniority and tenure areas are being observed. Laid off teachers will not get medical benefits after Dec. 31 and will be eligible for unemployment. There will be a meeting Monday, December 9 for those laid off.

Adam Urbanski also came in to answer questions. He spoke about how the superintendent is trying to take care of $30.1 million of the deficit now but in September there may be many more lay offs if they are not able to get help from New York State for the rest of the $68 million. He said that it would be less disruptive with layoffs in the summer and some would be covered with retirement and attrition.

If they need to make more lay offs, electives would be the first to go: primary art, music and phys ed.

For state aid, Harry Bronson is a proponent to the RCSD. David Gant and the governor may be a hindrance, the governor wanting the district to show they are doing something to help themselves.

There is an SEC investigation looking into the incompetence culpability or fraud. The state comptroller is also looking into it. There is an internal audit being done and there may be a NYSUT audit.

The **Retirement Incentive** is a legal agreement, so the district cannot cancel it but can delay it because the first payment states “January” so it may be the 31st and not the 1st.

ASAR has been reporting a concession of not cashing their vacations days; however, they are not cashing them in until after June 30 but many wait until they retire to take a large bonus. So this is not really a concession.

Urbanski said that health benefits are a human right and will not give concessions in this area. Other unions lowered their Healthy Rewards award from $500 to $400. The RTA has not agreed to this but is considering it. Pavone said that less that 25% of active teachers cash in their Healthy Rewards and only half of those reach the maximum award.

RRTA members voiced some concerns: Patty Brody brought up the waste of sub money for 1/2 day Special Ed meetings in CO when the committee could meet in buildings and release the teacher for only one hour.

Dave Altobelli said that if you lay off all the new hires, who would want to come to RCSD to teach with such uncertainty and the best of the best will go elsewhere.

Sharon Silvio said in the buildings where there is so much movement, the morale will be very low.

Linda Rapkin asked about the conflict among Board members. Urbanski said that there are personal issues, narrow mindedness, racial issues, a monopoly of what they think is best and they campaigned against each other.

Altobelli asked how the district got into such a financial pit. Urbanski said that first they changed the protocol of monthly reports to quarterly reports; the Board on the financial committee were just a rubber stamp and didn’t review the reports stating they weren’t financial experts, like those working for the district; and the Board said they were lied to and victims of misrepresentation. They were lulled into complacency.

5. **Holiday Party** — Karen Huey reported that they had 104 paid attendees. The party is December 12 and reminded everyone that this is the Dress a Girl fund raiser. Please bring in canned and dried goods for Dimitri House.

6. **Shaw Festival, Niagara on the Lake** — Cathy Fager said that they chose the 2 plays: Gypsy and Sherlock Holmes. She will order 47 tickets and a 56 seater bus. Bob Gerace will be helping her. They will choose a date the second week in June and the third week in September. All information will be in the January newsletter.

7. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli thanked all new and increased Vote Cope contributors.

8. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — They made 39 dresses, 13 dolls, and 7 sanitary packs. They sent dresses to a Bahamas church and will be sending more when the Action Committee packs them.

9. **Newspaper** — January paper will be coming out in February. There is a January 21 deadline. The paper will be mailed out on February 20. The major articles will be the Shaw Festival and pictures of the holiday party. Send in any articles or pictures you would like to share to Mary Barnum.

10. **Books for Kids** — They have $8500 in the budget. The group is going to School 45 on Monday, December 9.

11. **Calendar** — The Rep Assembly is December 17 at Wilson Foundations and the January 21 meeting will be at the same school.

12. **RRTA Membership**: There are 735 RRTA members to date.

13. Al Smith said that for the 5th year they are delivering toys to students at School 22 (previously School 6 building). They are looking for helpers to deliver them on December 18 in K to 6 classes from 10 am to 2 pm. You can contact him for info.

14. Charlie Dean said that he is still working on his own personal health and will miss the next RA meeting and resting at home.

Adjourned at 11:36.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary