**RRTA Meeting**

**February 6, 2020**

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

**Absent:** R. Allen, K. Barkley, B. Buckingham,K. Fager, M. Ferenchak, W. Humphrey, M. Keating, A. Smith, D. Sullivan

**Also in attendance**: L. Espinosa, S. Raymond

The meeting was called to order at 10:06.

1. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Charlotte Bloom Cohen, Sadie Hill, Matthew Lee Ricotta, Patricia M. Steele, Cornelius Sullivan, Mary Jo Whalen, Joan Willis and Ann F. Wood. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

2. The January RRTA minutes were approved as written.

3.  **Shaw Festival/Niagara on the Lake** — The information is in the newspaper being mailed in February.

4. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli said that the week of April 6 he will be preparing the 2020 Vote Cope Spring Campaign. He said that of the 45 new teachers that signed up at the August new teacher meeting 17 were laid off in December. Please consider increasing your contribution so that there will be funds to fight for teacher issues.

5.  **Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes reported that the group met January 27, and made 68 dresses, 200 pads for girls, and several dolls. They are sending a barrel along with the Action Committee to the Bahamas with dresses, school supplies and other items. They will be looking for a contact in Puerto Rico to send a shipment after the earthquake.

6. **Newspaper** — The group proofread the newspaper today and it will be going to the printer. They will be mailed out on February 20.

7. **Books for Kids** — On February 13 the group will give new picture books to School 20 and in March they will be going to School 22.

8.  **Political Action** — John Pavone came in to speak to the representatives about how Mayor Lovely Warren continues to try to take over the RCSD. In all her machinations by referendums, contacting reps in the Governor’s office, speaking with legislators in NYC and Buffalo, her next step is to replace Harry Bronson who has been the one to stop her from getting control each time. Now she has gotten the Democratic Committee to endorse her own person for the primaries. NYSUT will endorse Harry Bronson early and phone banks will come soon for the June 23 primaries. The push will be to call all NYSUT members in Bronson’s district.

The RTA Legislative Committee will hold interviews and if Yudelson asks to be endorsed, the committee will interview him and make a decision of whom to endorse.

If Harry Bronson loses and the mayor takes over the district through her endorsed candidates, the contract will be nullified and health benefits would be lost for retirees and reduced for active teachers.

Freddie Macek said that the Rochester AFL-CIO Labor Council is also looking to endorse Harry Bronson because he has been a proponent of labor with a proven record.

There was a discussion about the RTA Legislative Committee following the process of interviews of all candidates and following the procedures for endorsing a candidate.

The $25M spin up money is being discussed in Albany but the governor may put a caveat of allowing the mayor to choose the overseers with veto power. Once an agreement is made the money will be available immediately.

9. Adam Urbanski came into the discussion and said that the NYSUT bus with NYSUT officers would be coming into Rochester and visiting Schools 2 and RISE. Their visit its called “Fund Our Future” which is to bring attention to the financial needs of schools.

The schools are also looking for the foundation money (for high need schools) that has been held up in the governor’s office. Rochester was to get $86 million.

Urbanski said that lay offs could happen before June if money hasn’t been brought in to the district.

Urbanski asked that everyone wears their Solidarity buttons that are being furnished for RRTA members and all active teachers.

Urbanski was asked about the ROAR group. Barry Swan said that he attended one of their meetings and said they are a young group of teachers. The ROAR group has portrayed the RTA officers as too old, not flexible in change, and need to be more reactive to the school district. Swan said that he recommended to them that they become involved in the union by joining committees and run for rep positions in their buildings.

The ROAR group, it is said, are reacting to a perceived threat from the district and teachers need to be more proactive to get control of teaching and that they believe the world is changing and education needs to. They want to see more inclusiveness for people of color.

Urbanski’s message was that we should not turn on each other. If the ROAR group would like to get involved, they can run for the rep position and for the officer elections. They appear to be running a parallel union (ie they wrote a resolution similar to the one passed at the last rep meeting denouncing the lay offs). Some are mocking officers, locking out RTA officers from their Facebook page, some members are working with board members (wanting to eliminate seniority and layoff teachers to be replaced with teachers of color) and using anti union methods.

10. Charlie Dean said that there has been an increase of questions about the medical plans. He is happy to answer questions by calling him at home (865-1735).

11. **Rochester Labor Council** — Freddie Macek reported that there would be a Poor People rally at Mount Olivet Church, Friday, February 7 at 7 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 11:32.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA secretary