**RRTA Meeting**

**March 5, 2020**

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

**Absent:** Z. Artson-Crichlow, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, K. Evans, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, M. Keating, F. Macek, S. Silvio, D. Sullivan, J. Zuniga

**Also in attendance**: M. Casey, L. Espinosa, C. Fager, S. Raymond, D. Smith, A. Urbanski

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: Joan Ann Battersby, Germaine Caroselli Froehlich, Cheryl Johnson, Florence P. Jones. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

2. The February RRTA minutes were approved as corrected.

3. **Niagara on the Lake/Shaw** — all the information is in the January/February RRTA newspaper. March 26 is the deadline to send in your money for Gypsy on May 19. August 4 is the deadline for sending in your money for Sherlock Holmes. There are 47 tickets for each play, so send in your money quickly. Checks are cashed 45 days prior to the show. Once everything is set you will receive a letter for where to park, the time for leaving, and all other pertinent information. There was a concern expressed about arriving on time both in the morning, dealing with rush hour traffic and in getting on the bus to leave Niagara on the Lake to return back home.

4. **Vote Cope** — RTA is doing better in ranking of districts in contributing to the state fund. There are 455 retirees contributing to Vote Cope. There are 753 RRTA members of which 322 are Vote Cope contributors. With the cost of living increase in your pension please consider raising your contribution. Vote Cope helped Tier III retirees and will hopefully help new teachers in Tier V and VI.

Last year during the Vote Cope campaign the committee sent out forms to all 2,000 retirees with little results. This year the committee will target dues payers who do not contribute.

5. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya reported that they didn’t meet in February so not much work was done but some members worked with Fairy Godmothers at the Armory helping girls find and alter prom dresses.

6. **Newspaper** — Mary Barnum said that the deadline for the April paper is April 8. There will be the call for nominations for RRTA reps and the list of Vote Cope contributors. Send anything you would like included (articles or pictures) to Mary Barnum at the RTA office.

7. Adam Urbanski came in to discuss **RTA concerns** — He said that RORE claims they didn’t call for a strike on March 6. RTA extended a welcome back to RTA to work out issues.

**Fiscal issues** — Urbanski said that he feels confident that the district will get the funding they have been seeking from Albany for this year. NYSUT and Chancellor Rosa have been very helpful to Rochester. RTA has been trying to avoid a confrontation with the mayor. Part of the agreement is to name a monitor or two, but the governor wants the mayor to name the person(s), however, the RTA would like to have an independent person(s) named. Harry Bronson is helping to see that it will be an independent monitor and we need to support him in his reelection because he has been helpful to RTA.

Urbanski said that RTA may call an **impasse in negotiations.** He also said that the district may call a joint impasse because they can then choose a mediator rather than have one assigned. The district wants a salary freeze for this year and a salary give back for next year. Superintendent Dade and School Board member Natalie Shepard (who called for elimination of tenure and seniority to keep teachers they want) are encouraging RORE to cause discontent within the union.

Urbanski said that he hopes for the reduction of staff that the superintendent is calling for is realized through resignations and retirements, not lay offs. He also said that RTA is working with NYSUT and local community groups to get better funding for urban districts.

**Closing and reorganizing schools** — Urbanski said that the role of RTA is to look at the impact on RTA members of closing schools. They did negotiate that teachers in those schools that are certified in the areas needed will be able to remain in the school.

The community based pre k’s are in opposition and Urbanski said they don’t know where the RCSD is getting the pre k students and if those community based pre k’s would close or share the students or get students off a waiting list. He also doesn’t know if parents will be able to choose a program. RTA only can work with teachers for positions, but by Taylor Law, RTA can’t have a say in the program.

Al Smith asked about the tv announcement that there are more than 2000 homeless students. Urbanski said that now that this is exposed, the district is looking into it more aggressively. RTA is working with children’s services to get accurate numbers and make suggestions to best support these students.

Asked about the SEC report, Urbanski said that it will be out in the spring. He said that this is an “investigation” looking into fraud. The NYS comptroller is doing an audit.

Urbanski said that he appreciates RRTA’s work to help the union with daily tasks, moral support, etc. He said that they may be called in the future as issues arise.

8. Mary Barnum asked for a motion to have Nancy Westendorf come speak to the RTTA reps at the next meeting about “Keeping Our Promise Rochester” that assists refugees from the Iraq, Afghanistan, etc conflicts who worked with US military. The motion passed.

9. **Books for Kids** — The committee has over $7000. We will be going to School 16 to hand out books on March 26 at 2:15. We are buying books on March 13 at 9:30. Florence Jones had Books for Kids as a remembrance donation in her funeral announcement.

10. **Calendar** — has no changes or new events.

11. Patti Brody recommends the stained glass special exhibit at the Memorial Art Gallery.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16.

Mary Zimmer

Secretary