**RRTA Meeting (Virtual on Zoom)**

**February 4, 2021**

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

**Absent:** R. Allen,D. Altobelli, K. Barkley, M. Ferenchak, F. Macek, D. Sullivan

**Also in attendance**: S. Raymond, J. Robillard, M. Shapiro, M. Lavonis (RTA Secretary/zoom administrator)

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:07.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Barbara Blum, Marion Lee Gerych, Frank Mielnecki, Carol Hilgartner Schlank, Margaret “Peg” Witmer. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The January RRTA minutes were approved as revised.

4. **Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers** — This month the group is collecting cleaning supplies for The Sanctuary at Memorial ACE Zion on Clarissa Street. Anyone wishing to donate can drop off supplies (including laundry detergent) on Thursday, February 11 at 2 pm in the RTA lobby.

5. **RTA Officer Election** — Nomination forms went out in the mail and the election this year will be done electronically between April 22 and May 11. Mary Barnum sent Bill Gerber the dues payer lists. He will then forward them to Bernie Ferrara, the RTA office manager, who is working with the Nominations and Elections Committee. Those dues payers who do not have an email address will get the ballot by mail. Mary Barnum said that she will continue to work with Bernie to ensure that all members’ voices are heard. If you have not received your ballot either by email or through the post office within the dates above (but before the deadline of May 11), contact the RTA office by calling 546-2681.

6. **RRTA Newspaper** — Mary Barnum said that the next issue’s deadline will be March 1 and will include the list of RRTA dues payers. If you do not see your name on the list, but you had sent in your money, contact Mary Barnum. She said she has received only 400 dues payers, but at this time last year there were 750 members. She said she will be sending out a reminder to the approximately 350 who were members last year but have yet to send in their dues. The dues are $39.30. All new retirees were sent the letter in the fall to explain the importance of becoming an RRTA member and she received back 22 responses. Charlie Dean said that there have been many retirements since September due to Covid and that Bernie Ferrara should be asked for the list to send out the membership letters to new retirees. Mary Barnum said that she would do that and she goes into the RTA office once a week to pick up any membership checks. It is important to bring up our membership numbers or we will lose representatives to RTA, a voice in elections and a voice for retiree benefits.

7.  **Books for Kids** — no report

8. **Calendar** — There are no activities planned due to Covid. There are the monthly RTA meetings and the RRTA meetings will be March 4 and April 8. (The first Thursday in April, April 1, is a school spring vacation day.) February 11 is the Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers activity of collecting cleaning supplies at the RTA lobby at 2 pm.

9. Patti Brody commented about the recent Board meeting about reopening schools. She said she was very proud of the teachers who spoke at the zoom meeting. The Board meeting is on You Tube.

Sharon Silvio said that the Board was very disrespectful to the teachers by having their meeting after the children, parents, and community members’ speeches. They then held their meeting and teachers weren’t allowed on until 11 pm on a school night, hoping they would log off.

Carol Bonsignor Kitchen and Gaya Shakes said that many could not speak because they didn’t send them the zoom access code after signing up to speak or if they did, when they signed on they were put into a waiting room with no explanation and could be sitting in there for hours. They felt the Board would hope teachers would get frustrated and log off.

Martha Keating said that if you wrote a speech and couldn’t give it RTA would like you to send it in both to [RCSDk12.org](http://RCSDk12.org) and to Matt Lavonis at the RTA office. She also said the agenda is set up by the Board of Education, and they choose who is speaking and when.

At the meeting parents were saying that RTA does not speak for them and are making similar comments on radio programs.

10. **RRTA Rep Elections** — Nominations for the open positions (determined by the number of dues paying members) will be open in April. Because of the low membership currently, the RRTA could lose 10 reps. Number of reps is determined by June membership numbers. Ken Schultz asked if RRTA could get a waiver for the Covid year and keep the same number of reps that has been steady all other years at about 35 reps. Mary Barnum said that as membership increases, reps can be added.

11. Charlie Dean brought up that there has been great pressure on the RTA officers about Covid 19 and reopening schools. Some newer teachers are calling for them to hold a strike. Also the community has been turning on the union. If there is anything you can do to support the RTA and active teachers in this difficult time, please do.

12. **Vaccines** — Charlie Dean gave the information to register: [NY.gov](http://NY.gov) or call 1-833-697-4829 for an appointment at the Dome. He said to expect a long wait and it’s best to call between 9 -10 am when cancellations are reposted.

Mary Zimmer, RRTA secretary