**RRTA Meeting (Virtual on Zoom)**

**November 4, 2021**

**Attendance:**  R. Allen,D. Altobelli, Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, P. Brody, C. Dean, L. Espinosa, K. Evans, K. Fager, M. Ferenchak, B. Gerace, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Keating, F. Macek, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, B. Swan, D. Sullivan, F. Valente, M. Zimmer, J. Zuniga

**Absent:** K. Barkley, B. Buckingham, S. Flynn, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, D. Voellinger, Y. Wooten

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:05.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Fannie Pearl Daniels, Nancy S. Sundberg. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The October RRTA minutes were approved as written.

4.  **Cost of Living info** — You should have recently received information about the COLA program that has been in existence since 2001 when you are eligible to receive the percentage increase for the first $18,000. If you have received the COLA since 2001, your monthly check has been increased by $399/month which is almost a $5,000 annual increase. A retiree can collect COLA if: a) you have been retired for 5 years and are 62 years of age; b) you are 55 years old and have been retired for 10 years; c) you have been on disability retirement and age is irrelevant; or d) you are the surviving spouse that the retiree had chosen for the pop up or option for a lifetime benefit and the survivor gets 1/2 of the yearly COLA that the retiree would have gotten.

5.  **Medical Plan info** — November is open enrollment time. If you are 65 or older you should have received information from the City School District. The links for information and videos will be on the RTA website ([rochesterteachers.com](http://rochesterteachers.com)) in the RRTA (retiree) section. November 10 will be the 2 zoom informational meetings from MVP and Excellus.

Costs of 3 plans have decreased, one plan increased effective January 1, 2022.

If you have questions, you can call Charlie Dean at 585 865-1735. He will answer question but will not make recommendations.

MVP and Excellus are medicare advantage plans and you are being sent many alternative plans in the mail. You can only hold one medicare advantage plan.

6. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — The group continues to meet at St. Bernard’s and is sewing and making blankets to donate this winter. Gaya said that the group may be returning to the RTA office after the first of the year.

7. **Labor Council** — Freddie Macek reported for the council saying that they participated in phone banks and literature drops by many local unions though they are not too happy about the results. Two races are not determined yet and may stay Democratic.

November 30 there is a Labor Council dinner at the Convention Center for $60. Freddie said that she will be proposing to the group that retirees only pay $40.

Mary Barnum thanked Freddie for all the work she does with the Labor Council.

In a continual discussion about elections 3 of the 5 resolutions failed (redistricting, no reason absentee ballots, early registration). There was a lot of negative advertising based on fear and hatred that the opposite side did not respond to educate voters about the positive aspects of the resolutions. Also, NYSUT did not get out information about taking a stand for the resolutions until after early voting started. It was noted that many did not turn over the ballot to vote for the resolutions and again, if union members were better informed, would have voted for them. A concise messaging to inform the public was necessary and needed to be timely.

8.  **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli recognized the work that Mary Barnum does for putting together the quarterly newspaper especially during these difficult times of limited access to the RTA office. Thanks to the newspaper and the list of Vote Cope contributors, many were reminded to send in their contributions. Over 50 have sent in their contribution. Checks go to the RTA office and then are sent to NYSUT so it may take a while to be cashed. Charlie Dean reminded people that a monthly pension deduction would make it easier not to forget. Mary Barnum thanked those who did send in a check.

9. **Newspaper** — Mary Barnum thanked Diana Voellinger for coming into the RTA office to help send out the November RRTA newspaper. The secretaries in the office also helped to finish the job of preparing the 2230 newspapers. It will be sent out in bulk mail next Tuesday, November 9.

471 names who’ve paid their RRTA dues for 2021-22 will be listed in this RRTA newspaper. There are 4 reps who haven’t paid and if haven’t paid by a determined date, will be removed as a rep. If your name is not on the list of 471 members, please send in your dues. If you received a small pocket 2022 calendar and an AFT calendar, the RTA office received your dues. If you received a NYSUT calendar, that comes from Albany and this does not necessarily mean you have sent in your dues.

Mary thanked Linda Rapkin and Alex Johnson for sending in articles for the paper.

The next issue of the RRTA newspaper is scheduled to come out in February.

10 **Books for Kids** — There is no new information because the group has not met.

11. **Calendar** — There is nothing on the calendar except for RTA and RRTA meetings. (December 2 at 10 am)

12.  **New Business** — Patti Brody said that we should support all active teachers who are in the difficult, dangerous situations that we are hearing about in the schools. Mary Barnum said she sent the letter to all RRTA reps that the ASAR (administrative) president sent to the Superintendent about removing disruptive students to online learning or an alternative school. The Superintendent’s response was included and she is having difficulty in following through with any decision.

Board member LeBron was on Evan Dawson’s show with Adam Urbanski and she repeated several times that it is in the teachers’ contract that teachers are supposed to break up fights. **This is not true. Teachers are recommended not to break up a fight** because that is when they get injured and are not trained for this. Students do not see the adult when they are swinging and fighting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA secretary