**RRTA Meeting (Virtual on Zoom)**

**January 6, 2022**

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

**Absent:** B. Buckingham, D. Altobelli, K. Barkley, M. Ferenchak, A. Johnson, M. Keating

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:02.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Elmer Henrietta, Eleanor Hulme, Jacob McKnight, Walter Padiak, William Read, and the two students from the Leadership for Young Men School on the Charlotte campus who died this past week. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The December RRTA minutes were approved as written.

4. **Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes reported that they are continuing to meet at St. Bernard’s making blankets for the homeless including the City’s homeless village (across from Nick Tahou’s) on Broad Street. The group meets the third Thursday of the month at 9 am. Gaya will write an article for the February RRTA newspaper to explain where to find them and inviting anyone who would like to join the group to come and participate.

If anyone would like to donate to organizations that help the homeless you can take donations to the House of Mercy on Ormand Street or Beyond the Sanctuary (Carmen Allen, contact).

Sharon Silvio said that she and Chojy Shroeder received donations for refugees they work with. She thanked the group and will share a photo.

5,. **Labor Council** — Freddi Macek said that she attended the RLC awards dinner which was in person. Leticia James and Adam Bello spoke at the dinner. Juieanne Weiss received a Political Action award.

6. **Vote Cope** — Charlie Dean recommended that everyone contribute or increase your contribution to Vote Cope to help support educational and social service (COLA, SS, Medicare) issues in these turbulent political times. NYSUT sent out the forms to do this but if you did not get a form and would like one, contact Mary Barnum at RTA. She said that many retirees give over $100 per year and thanks them for their contributions. If you use one of these forms, send it in to the RTA office because they would like to record the contribution before forwarding the form to Albany.

7. **Books for Kids** — Diana Voellinger is accepting donations to the group and sends out acknowledgements.

8. **Calendar** — February 3 at 10 am is the next RRTA meeting.

9. **Newspaper** — The February issue is being readied for the printer. It should be mailed out in early February (depending on COVID and the ability to meet and send it out). It will include the list of dues payers which is now 633 (120 members less than the highest number in 2020-21); a notice from the book club; a thank you to those helping with the mailings; a notice about the RTA mask availability; Toys for Tots pictures and information from Dress a Girl.

10. **NYSUT/AFT Delegate Elections** — Ballots will be sent out via email and the election runs from January 18 to February 4. There are about 100 RRTA members who do not have emails registered at RTA and will receive their ballots via US mail. Please vote when you receive your ballot.

11.  **New Business**:

A) There have been questions about retiring from active teachers. To receive money from not using sick days (according to the contract), a person wishing to retiree must submit a letter of retirement to Central Office before March 1. It is recommended to send the letter via email and keep all records with the dates sent.

If a retiring teacher has questions about medical benefits, Charlie Dean said they can call him at home to answer questions (865-1735). According to the RTA contract, a retiree must have 10 years in the RCSD system to be included in the RCSD health plan.

If you are 55 but have less than 30 years of service, it is recommended that you do a conference call with NYSTR to know what your benefits are. They would be greatly reduced if this is the case. Some people can buy back years depending on the work done.

B) Mary Barnum said that the issue with the RRTA rep and the dues has been resolved.

The meeting adjourned at 10:56.

The next meeting is February 3 at 10 am.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary