**RRTA Meeting (Virtual on Zoom)**

**May 5, 2022**

**Attendance:**  D. Altobelli, Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, L. Espinosa, K. Evans, M. Ferenchak, B. Gerace, W. Humphrey, M. Keating, F. Macek, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, A. Smith, C. Smith, B. Swan, D. Sullivan, D. Voellinger, M. Zimmer, J. Zuniga

**Absent:** R. Allen,, K. Barkley, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, S. Flynn, K. Fager, K. Huey, M. Jenkins-Cox, A. Johnson, F. Valente, Y. Wooten

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

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:04.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Patricia Bartholomay, Susan Gerling, Judy Haskin. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The April RRTA minutes were approved as written.

4. The RRTA newspaper arrived in houses after the sub workshop deadline. They asked Annamaria Manso to extend the deadline.

5. **NYSTRA Cola** — In September, those who are eligible for the NYSTRA Cola will get a 3% raise, the maximum that can ever be given. It will mean a $45 per month increase on the first $18,000. Please consider increasing your Vote Cope contribution since they are the group responsible for getting the retirees Cola.

6. **Dress a Girl** — Gaya Shakes said that April 15 a shipment was sent to Uganda. Their final meeting of the year will be in June and they hope to resume at the RTA office in September.

7. **Labor Council** — Their political action committee has no endorsement for the primary. They will be interviewing candidates in July for the November elections and will be sharing their endorsements at that time. Their annual meeting was held indoors recently and many retirees did not feel comfortable in attending. Many local politicians attended. Freddi Macek reported that there was also a panel of Starbucks employees who discussed their unionizing in their workplace.

May 17 will be School Board elections and School Budget votes outside of the city. Please learn about those who are running for School Boards to make educated choices and vote yes on the school budgets.

Freddi also reported that contested primary elections may be held off until August because of the redistricting issues. Make sure you go out to vote when the primaries occur.

Diane Sayer, an extreme right and supporter of the KKK, is running on the independent ticket against Chuck Schumer.

8. **Vote Cope** — Dave Altobelli reported that the annual spring drive has begun. Instead of receiving a thank you gift, they have increased the number of restaurant gift certificates at the June drawing. Anyone contributing $60/year will have their name entered in the drawing.

Dave thanked Kathy Evans, Aimee Rinere, Karen Lahr and Jason Valenti for helping prepare the campaign materials.

At the RTA rep meeting Dave presented the percentage per building of contributors. Unfortunately, in most buildings the percentage of contributors is low.

Gaya suggested that if active teachers who contribute to Vote Cope are named, others may contribute. The RRTA list the contributors in the August newspaper, which reminds those who send in a yearly check to do so. Also it was said that active teachers need to be educated about what Vote Cope does to effect them. Dave said that 20% of contributions stay in the area and another 20% can be requested. Dave said he’ll talk to John Pavone about how to get more active teachers involved.

Active teachers need to know that Vote Cope is working on changing Tier 6 to the benefit of active, younger teachers. Linda Rapkin suggested that Adam write a letter in the RTA newspaper about the benefits of Vote Cope and Cathy Smith suggested that retiree reps mentor active reps on how to rally staff into action.

9.  **Newspaper** — Everyone who is an RRTA member should have received the newspaper recently. The next newspaper for August has a deadline of July 15. The paper will have the Vote Cope list, an article about Vote Cope from Dave Altobell and other retirees can include a note about how Vote Cope has helped them.

Mary Barnum said that 84 teachers have signed up to retire this year and commented how difficult teaching has become.

Any other articles are welcome by the deadline. Send them in to Mary Barnum.

10. **Nominations for RRTA Building Reps** — There was an inconsistency with Matt’s (RTA secretary) numbers of reps and the actual number because of the number or RRTA members. Mary Barnum said she is working with him. She said that she had gotten several nominations from existing members. (Frank Valente, Yolanda Wooten, Linda Rapkin, Patti Brody, Marie Ferenchak, and Zelda Artson Crichlow). Several attending the meeting put their names in (Dave Altobelli, Lucia Espinosa, Barry Swan, Martha Keating, Barbara Buckingham, and Al Smith). Also Maurren McCarron has sent in her nomination.

11.  **Books for Kids** — If things open up in September, the group may start again. The group continues to accept donations. (Check written to FLACE/Books for Kids which are tax exempt.)

12. **Calendar** — June 1 is the deadline for receiving nominations of RRTA reps.

June 2 is the next RRTA rep meeting at 10 am.

13. The Committee went into Executive Session.

14. **Retirees** — 84 retirees will get lawn signs in their yards. Aimee Rinere and Bill Gerber are designing them. Matt Lavonas said that there might possibly be a dinner for those retirees over the past 3 years. (’20, ’21, ’22)

Charlie Dean said that those retiring have been calling him for advice and information about benefits, RRTA and other topics.

15. Gaya Shakes suggested that RTA have a membership meeting to discuss history and to rally together with common information.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary