**RRTA Meeting (zoom meeting)**

**January 4, 2024**

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

**Absent:** D. Altobelli, B. Buckingham, M. Ferenchak, S. Flynn, P. Givens, A. Johnson, M. Keating.S. Silvio, A. Smith, T. Stamper Webster, D. Sullivan

**Also in attendance**: M. Ludwig, S. Raymond, J Robillard, M Lavonis, zoom coordinator

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:03.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Efrain (Freddie) Medina and Stephen Lambert. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The December RRTA minutes are posted on line within a week of the meeting. If there are any questions, contact Mary Zimmer and changes will be announced at the next meeting.

4. **Announcements:**

a) The next RRTA meeting will be February 1 at 10 am on zoom. If interested in attending, contact Charlie Dean to get link.

b) Excellus has broken negotiations and relations with “Well Now Urgent Care”. If you have Excellus as your medical provider you cannot go there for medical care without being charged. It will be considered “out of network” and if asking for reimbursement will be charged 20%. Those with MVP are not effected and continue to be covered.

Ellen Robinson said that WHEC, Channel 10 has a list of Urgent Care facilities that accept Excellus or you can check with URMC or Regional Health.

Lucia Espinosa said that Evan Dawson on his January 3 show on WXXI (which you can hear past talks on his podcast) spoke to a man with MS from a group called IRYS that helps people with medical bill advice and where to get grants to help with expenses.

c) Remember to vote in RTA’s NYSUT/AFT/NEA delegate election. Ballots were sent out electronically (those who do not have an email will receive the ballot in the mail). If you have a problem (not received or get rejected) contact Karen Lahr at RTA.

d) Maureen McCarron resigned as an RRTA/RTA rep as of December 10, 2023.

4. **Holiday Party/Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Charlie Dean thanked Karen Huey for all the work she did in arranging the successful gathering. There were 63 - 65 attendees and Karen said that the donations of food were sent to Dimitri House and Beyond the Sanctuary and thanked Gaya Shakes for seeing to that. Gaya reported that the fundraiser for Dress A Girl/Savvy Sewers raised $650 from raffle sales and $200 from individual donations. She said that the raffle went smoothly and the color coded tickets worked well. Mary Barnum thanked those who took pictures at the luncheon that will be in the January newspaper. Charlie said that the Dress a Girl raffle makes the luncheon fun for all, but would like to see the raffle held after dinner so the restaurant staff and food aren’t held up.

Gaya thanked Bob Gerace for helping with carrying the canned goods to their car and for the afghans he donated.

She also said the group have received 2 grants, one from Spiritus Christi and the Soros Foundation.

5.  **Newspaper** — Mary Barnum said she needs more material and needs it by Monday, January 8. As the meeting proceeded she asked Ken Schultz to write an article about AARP’s free tax service for seniors. She asked Freddi Macek to write an article about the Labor Council who honored 2 RRTA members for their work on the phone banks and 2023, the Year of the Strikes.

The newspaper will include the list of dues payers: 571 names. There will also be a report on the holiday party with pictures. The newspaper will go to all 2200 retirees. Anyone who sent dues, but your name is not on the list, contact Mary Barnum at RTA.

6. **Books for Kids** — January the group is visiting School 9 on Friday, January 19 at 10:30. The February and March groups dates are coming soon. Five new RRTA retirees have become involved in Books for Kids this year.

7. **Labor Council —** Freddi Macek said that the Labor Council had their annual holiday dinner and 2 RRTA members received honorable mention for their work with the phone banks during the election season: Julie Clayton and Alan Silverman.

Primaries will be coming up in June and elections in November. They will need volunteers for the phone banks again. She said that several unions, SCIU, nurses and UAW settled their contracts in 2023 successfully.

8. **Calendar** - February 1 will be the next RRTA meeting. Charlie Dean wanted to point out that the April meeting will be the second Thursday of April. School is on vacation for Spring Break the first Thursday.

9.  **New Business** —

a) Ken Schultz reported that AARP has a free tax service. There are many sites around Monroe County that can be found on the AARP website. He is at the Henrietta Senior Center and will send to Charlie Dean the list of local sites that he can send out to RRTA members.

b) Bob Gerace said that he and Cathy Fager will be organizing Niagara On The Lake Shaw Festival. He was given 2 dates by the bus company for the Sherlock Holmes play: October 3 and 9. The 3rd is the October RRTA meeting so October 9 was chosen. More information will be in future newspapers.

c) Barry Swan asked the group reconsider and have someone from the RORE group come and speak to the retirees at a meeting. After a discussion, there was not a consensus to have anyone come in to speak to the group.

d) Kevin Fager made a motion to meet in person for RRTA meetings, Karen Huey seconded the motion. He said if the weather is bad, the rep can elect to stay home in February and March. The motion failed 1 to 9.

e) Mary Barnum spoke of the motion made at the RA in December that directed the executive council to set up a diverse committee to consider the feasibility of paying reps. The concern coming mainly from the elementary reps. The committee are then to bring the results of their findings to the rep assembly. Mary asked that the retirees be careful what is said and not to annoy the active teachers. Kevin Fager said that some suburbs pay reps between $600 to $800 per year. There was a question if this would increase RTA dues to pay the reps. It was said that some of the reps proposing this change are looking to run for RTA offices in the May 2025 elections.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20.

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary