**RRTA Meeting**

**April 11, 2024**

**Attendance:**  Z. Artson-Crichlow, M. Barnum, P. Brody, C. Dean, L. Espinosa, K. Fager, M. Ferenchak, S. Flynn, B. Gerace, K. Huey, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins-Cox, L. Rapkin, E. Robinson, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, D. Sullivan, B. Swan, Y. Wooten, M. Zimmer

**Absent:** D. Altobelli, C. Bonsignore-Kitchen, B. Buckingham, K. Evans, P. Givens, A. Johnson, M. Keating, F. Macek,. K. Schultz, A. Smith, C. Smith, T. Stamper Webster, F. Valente, J. Zuniga

**Also in attendance**: J. Cox Hiler, A. Urbanski

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:08.

2. A moment of silence was observed for teachers who have passed away in the past month: Iris Bannister, Susan Hartwell, Marlene Gordon, Howard Jones Jr., Maureen O’Byrne, Dennis Pilato, and Suzanne Swingly. A $25 donation is made to Books for Kids in memory of any RRTA member.

3. The March 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 **May 9** at 10 am in person at RTA. Charlie Dean said he had jury duty the first week of May and made a motion to move the meeting to the second week of May. The motion passed.

b) The COLA was tentatively announced at 3.5% for the September pension check. It would mean a $27 increase on the first $18,000 thanks to NYSUT and Vote Cope. To receive the COLA, you must be retired for 5 years and be at least 62 years old.

5. **Adam Urbanski** came in to speak to the RRTA reps. The major issue that RTA faces is the resignation of the Superintendent during the reorganization period. RTA has asked him to stay on until July 1 to help with the transitions of the school changes and he has agreed. Urbanski said that Peluso was a great collaborator with all groups he worked with. He will be a loss to the RCSD.

There are many challenges the district face this coming year: the district is losing the extra money sent to schools from the federal and state government for Covid help, the decline in enrollment and all the money going to charter schools, and the state budget that had made cuts to the districts.

Dr. Urbanski has written an article for the RRTA April newspaper sharing these challenges.

6. **Niagara on the Lake/Shaw Festival** — Bob Gerace said that October 9 is the date set to go and see Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of the Human Heart. It will cost $139 for RRTA dues paying members and $159 for non members. They will leave from Winton Place at 8 am and you must bring your passport or enhanced license to get into Canada. The form is in the April RRTA newspaper and the group needs 30 participants by September 1.

7. **Dress a Girl/Savvy Sewers** — Gaya Shakes reported that they sent dresses and hygiene packets to Brazil and Kenya. The group had a presentation from Zululand and Dress a Girl donated $500 to their orphanage. They now have a goal to make larger dresses for older girls and the power hygiene packs. The group had planned to send items to Haiti but because of the political unrest, they have had to put that on hold.

8. **Labor Council** — Freddi Macek was absent but Sharon Silvio asked to speak. She hopes everyone gets involved in the 2024 election. She said that every Friday groups get together at New City Cafe at 441 Parsells from 9 - 10:15 to write postcards. You can get more information by contacting her. Dress a Girl group has also written postcards in the last election, Gaya stated.

9. **Vote Cope** — Please don’t forget to contribute or increase your contribution.

10. **RRTA Rep Elections** — The following reps’ terms are expiring in June: D. Altobelli, Z. Artson Crichlow, M. Barnum, P. Brody, B. Buckingham, C. Dean, L. Espinosa, M. Ferenchak, S. Flynn, K. Huey, M. Keating, L. Rapkin, A. Smith, T. Webster, B. Swan, F. Valente, and Y. Wooten.

There are 17 positions that will be open based on 645 dues paying RRTA members. We hope retirees join RRTA to stay up to date with retiree issues and benefits. RRTA dues payers are voters of RTA positions and the executive board is aware that we have a powerful block with our votes.

Those who have another year as RRTA rep are: C. Bonsignore Kitchen, K. Fager, B. Gerace, W. Humphrey, M. Jenkins Cox, A. Johnson, F. Macek, E. Robinson, K. Schultz, G. Shakes, S. Silvio, C. Smith, D. Sullivan, M. Zimmer and J. Zuniga.

The nomination form and information will be in the April RRTA newspaper. Nominations are taken until the date listed in the paper. Verbal nominations will be taken at the May and June RRTA meetings. At the June meeting it will be determined if there will be an election or if there are only 17 names submitted, they will be determined electees.

11. **Newspaper** — The April newspaper will have information for Shaw, RRTA rep election, list of dues payers, and an article from Adam Urbanski. Mary Barnum will let reps know when the newspapers are in, are ready to be put in envelopes and to come in to prepare it.

12.  **Books for Kids** — Cathy Smith and Kathy Evans are going to School 42 in April or May. Donations are taken at any time for the tax exempt program. (Books for Kids/FLACE) The group is happy to welcome any volunteer to become a member to visit first grades.

13. **Calendar** — **May 9 — RRTA meeting at 10 am in the RTA offices**

May 3 & 4 —NYSUT Convention in NYC

October 9 — Shaw play

**Next meeting: May 9.**

meeting adjourned at 11:50

Mary Zimmer

RRTA Secretary