



Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day



A Union of Professionals



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Minutes of the BTA Representative Assembly Meeting: June 1, 2010

Table with 3 columns listing attendees: Name, Title, and Status. Includes Kim Atwell (President), Elizabeth Hanrahan (JVJ), Charlotte Sypher (NYSUT Delegate-absent), Diane D'Uva (Vice President), Terri Losito (JVJ), Jennifer Vasil (AFT Delegate-absent), Jeff Matus (Treasurer), Alicia Fahlman (Glenham), John Burns (NYSUT Delegate, VOTE/COPE), Dawn Clemens (Secretary), Donna Snowden (Glenham-excused), Gina Fontenot (Retirement), Bobby Atwell (BHS), Matt Carpenter (Sargent), Jennifer Fisher (Social), Bill Castaldi (BHS), Jane Cervone (Sargent), Elizabeth Botero (Dental-excused), Tom Clemens (RMS), Kelley Bender (South Avenue), Donna Glynn (Mid Hudson Teacher Center Liaison-excused), Roe Greco (RMS), Lisa Biersack (South Avenue), Dave Ryley (Scholarship-excused).

President Kim Atwell called the meeting to order at 3:51 in the Community Room at BHS. Dawn Clemens made a motion to accept the minutes from the May 4, 2010 meeting. Seconded by Bill Castaldi, the motion passed unanimously.

D. Clemens then made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss old business as the third agenda item of the meeting. Seconded by B. Atwell, the motion passed.

Old Business:

Jim Henry (BTA Chief Negotiator on the past 4 contracts) spoke to the Representative Assembly as well as the present Negotiations Team about contract history and rationale.

- Henry gave out a handout detailing the evolution of changes in the contract from 1997 to our present contract.
- He stated that he believes that the new team is "a little short on experience" and that he is still available for assistance.
- Question: Why was the cost sharing health care provision put into the contract in 1995? Answer: It was not a smart move. As a result unit members could have ended up paying 50% of their health care.
- Question: Why did the BTA agree to a 0% raise in 2003? Answer: To fix the health care issue. It was the right time to fix the problem. As a result our yearly increases were: 0%, 4%, 4%, 4% (instead of 3,3,3,3% that was previously negotiated).
- Question: Why would we settle (after the issue with the health care coverage) when we were still unhappy with the contract? Answer: Percent increases of health care were not significant in the beginning. In 2003 the opportunity presented itself to be able to successfully negotiate with the district.
- Question: What do you think will be the biggest issue in the upcoming negotiations? Answer: It depends on the superintendent. Also, the economic situation and contracts negotiated by other local districts.
- Question: Why did the district go for adding a 23rd longevity rather than increasing the amounts of the other longevities? Answer: When the 23rd longevity was put into the contract it was a significant increase. It was 10% of the top step at the time.
- Question: When was the last time that the entire contract was opened for negotiations? Answer: Not in the last 16 years. By not opening the contract the union was able to "keep a leash" on the previous superintendent. The downside of not opening the contract is that some things were neglected and are outdated.
- Question: Were there lengthy discussions about opening the whole contract up for negotiations? Answer: Not recently. Things may be different with a new superintendent.
- Question: Why did the BTA not utilize the expertise of the NEA in previous negotiations? Answer: We did have a NEA lawyer present at the table. His purpose was to "bring us back if we were going too far".
- Question: Did the NEA representative ever push us to gain equity with other districts, for example a Welfare Trust? Answer: Yes. Both sides have things that they are interested in negotiating.
- \* About the Benefit Trust: few people knew about it and there were few conversations about the things that we don't have here to educate the membership. As Kim has researched information, she has found that we are alone in our area being without certain benefits. NYSUT has been instrumental in educating their members.

- **Question:** What is the likelihood of us getting a Masters +30 pay scale added. Answer: It depends on the interest of the district.
- **Question:** What is the most important step on the salary schedule? **Answer:** The top step because you will be on that step the longest and your retirement is based on that salary which could be more than forty years.
- **\*Sick Time:** Can be an item that the Board of Education wants to target. Our current contract rewards those who are retiring for taking sick time.
- **Percentages vs. Fixes Dollar Amounts:** We pay percentages (ex. health insurance) but we are paid in fixed dollar amounts. For example: the health insurance buy out. We get \$1,200 and district saves \$13,000. There was a concern that if too many people opt out of our health insurance, how many people need to stay enrolled to maintain enrollment and keep our premiums down? We will need a health insurance expert to give us the bottom line number.
- **Openness:** It was expressed that it is very important for union leadership to be open and to provide information to the membership throughout the process. It is also very important for the membership to pay attention during the process and to ask questions.
- Thank You to Jim Henry for coming to our meeting and sharing his information.

**Officer Reports:**

**TREASURER:** Jeff Matus Balances as of June 1, 2010-

Account	Balance
Checking	\$42,195.66
Savings	\$30,656.90
CD	\$19,277.97
Total:	\$92,130.53
Dental	\$8,729.05

**SECRETARY:** Dawn Clemens

- **DCUTC Report:** Atwell will cover most in her report and at General Membership. NYSUT helps in Superintendent search in Arlington
- **Pre Negotiations Meeting:** Last meeting of the school year at Sargent on June 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:40

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Diane D'Uva

- Non-coaching supplemental job descriptions will be rewritten this summer. We will be using recently surfaced old descriptions as well as descriptions provided by membership.
- Seniority lists will be worked on this summer also.
- Mid Hudson Leadership Conference attendees will be: Kim Atwell, Diane D'Uva, Dawn Clemens, Donna Snowden, Terri Losito, and Angie Winkleman

**PRESIDENT:** Kim Atwell

- **Professionalism:** Many people have asked about the email that Atwell sent to the membership about professional behavior. If the issue was only about one teacher, a mass email would not have been sent out.
  - o Professionalism needs to be focused on as a whole by the membership.
  - o Faculty members are engaging in inappropriate dialogue with students, befriending students, conversing on facebook/twitter/MySpace, there have been pictures of teachers partying in public, teachers have engaged in discussions about their personal life (sexual orientation, drug use), cursing at kids, gossiping with students about other teachers, hanging out with students outside of school, and exchanging cell phone numbers.
  - o These behaviors hurt the individual and hurt the association as a whole.
  - o Confidentiality is key; do not gossip with students or teachers.
- **Observations/Evaluations:** There are concerns about building administration not following through with the observation/evaluation process.
  - o If a tenured teacher does not get their yearly observation/evaluation they technically can file a grievance.
  - o It is very important for untenured teachers to receive their observations/evaluations. If they are not complete the Board of Education does not have to approve the person for tenure. The teacher may have to get a Juul Agreement (a 4<sup>th</sup> year extension).
  - o There are issues of continuity between the various buildings and for special areas teachers.
- **Building usage this summer:** There will be limited building access this summer. No one will be allowed into the buildings. Charlie Symon will keep everyone updated throughout the summer and Atwell will inform the membership as to when we can return to the buildings.

- Retirement incentive: The retirement incentive bill has been signed into law. The district has the ability to pick and choose who they will offer incentive to under the law. Before anything can happen the district will need to opt in to program. The union cannot advise members as to whether or not to take the incentive. People who would like information on the plan and how it would apply to them should call NYSTRS to set up a meeting.
- Transfers: The retirement law could have an impact on transfers. Atwell urged the district to inform teachers of their assignments for next year as soon as possible.
- Tutoring and home instruction: We are responsible as teachers to submit work for students and to grade the work if the student is on your roster.
- Negotiations: The team will be receiving summer research assignments where they will be completing contract comparison analysis. The team will meet at least twice this summer.
- General Membership meeting: The meeting will take place on June 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be a presentation by AFLAC.
- New BHS Principal: An interview team has been meeting with candidates and is down to two candidates. Mr. DiMarco will be leaving June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Thank you: Atwell expressed her thanks to all who have been involved in the BTA over the past two years especially the members of the Representative Assembly. She also welcomed Mike Mullins, Angie Winklemann, Alicia Tyra, and Danielle Yeaple to the RA. She also commended Roe Greco for all of the years she has given to the organization.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **MEMBERSHIP:** Dawn Clemens

- Current membership is 269, please let D. Clemens know if you have a name or address change.

#### **CONSTITUTION:** Dawn Clemens--- Clemens thanked the committee for their hard work.

#### **PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Dawn Clemens

- Newsletter will be coming out soon
- Renegades Tickets- As part of our membership of DCUTC the BTA received 145 Tickets for the July 15<sup>th</sup> game where the giveaway is replica jerseys. Tickets will be distributed shortly.

#### **ELECTION:** Diane D'Uva

- Most positions were uncontested.
- The new building reps are: Glenham- Danielle Yeaple, South Ave- Mike Mullins, RMS- Angie Winklemann
- The new NYSUT delegate is Alicia Tyra and the new AFT delegate is Charlotte Sypher
- Thank you to Roe Greco for her years of service!
- The BTA 2010-2011 budget passed

#### **GRIEVANCE:** Diane D'Uva- None at this time

#### **BUDGET:** Jeff Matus- No report

#### **SCHOLARSHIP:** Dave Ryley

- The committee chose three recipients who will each receive \$1,000. The teachers who were written about will present the students their awards.

#### **POLITICAL ACTION:**

##### J. Burns:

- VOTE/COPE- Burns has plans for a bigger campaign next year because across the nation unions are getting hammered and things are bad at the state level as far as education is concerned
- Payroll deduction is the best way to go for VOTE/COPE contributions and makes our lives easier
- Locally we rely on VOTE/COPE funds for budget vote and board elections
- The State legislature is in favor of increasing the number of charter schools in the state. They look good to public but are not accountable to ESL or special education students.

##### K. Atwell:

- Atwell and C. Sypher attended the ED Contiguous Meeting in Newburgh. AFT President Randi Weingarten spoke about how charter schools take a toll on local school districts.
- New APPR regulations were signed into law. The current move in education is to try to link student performance with teacher pay and teacher evaluations with test scores. The original proposal for the new APPR originally would have based 51% of our evaluations on student test scores. Through negotiations NYSUT brought it down to 20% on test scores. The other 80% will be negotiated.
- Why is NYSUT supporting these changes? NYSUT's rationale is that the changes are coming regardless of our involvement and at least we will be at the table and have a say in some of the specifics. This is a direct reflection of the Obama administration.

#### **SOCIAL:** Jennifer Fisher---21 teachers have signed up to attend the BTA BBQ and there will be approximately 50 people in attendance

**TECHNOLOGY:** Bill Castaldi

- The website is doing well
- We are looking into transferring whose name is on the account from Castaldi to the treasurer
- If you have any suggestions for the website, let us know

**RETIREMENT:** Gina Fontenot- An update will be in the next BTA newsletter

**DENTAL:** Kim Atwell

- New point people have volunteered, they are looking for volunteers from each building to act as liaisons.
- Atwell is looking to have the district to take over the dental this summer. There is the possibility of an umbrella policy with vision and life insurance.
- If the district does not take over the dental we are looking in to the possibility of having a separate account just for dental.

**Building Reports:**

**BHS:** Thank you to the Principal Interviewing committee for holding interviews for new principal, reminder to everyone to be vigilant in the halls and to monitor student behavior

**Glenham:** Things are going well; packing is in process, thank you to Alicia Fahlman for her service

**JVF:** Things are going well

**RMS:** Issues regarding building climate and are still being worked on; discipline issues are still being worked on by all parties especially as it pertains to communication. On behalf of the building and myself (T. Clemens), I would like to thank Roe for all of the years we have worked together, and extend a welcome to Angie Winkleman.

**Sargent:** Confusion in regards to observations has been taken care of

**South Ave:** Welcome to Mike Mullins, thank you to Marianne Haight and Rich Caragine for volunteering to help with the dental; the building is sponsoring a hole for the BTA Scholarship Golf Tournament, thank you to Lisa Biersack for her years of service, everything else is good

**New Business:**

None

The next meeting of the BTA Representative Assembly (RA) will take place in August at the 84 Diner.

All business having been completed, Elizabeth Hanrahan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Matt Carpenter. Kim Atwell adjourned the meeting at 6:15 pm.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by BTA Secretary, Dawn Clemens.