



Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day



Minutes of the BTA Representative Assembly Meeting: December 1, 2009

Table with 3 columns listing members and their roles: Kim Atwell- President, Elizabeth Hanrahan- JVF, Charlotte Sypher- NYSUT Delegate, etc.

President Kim Atwell called the meeting to order at 3:53 in the Community Room at BHS. Dawn Clemens made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 1, 2009 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 T. Clemens, the motion passed.

Old Business:

- 1. Golf Tournament- K.Atwell stated that the possibility of a BTA Golf Tournament was discussed at the December Representative Assembly meeting. She reminded the RA that all of the proceeds of the tournament would benefit the BTA Scholarship Fund. She also mentioned that Scott Sabatelle would be looking for volunteers to help organize the event. This would function as a subcommittee for the Scholarship Committee.
a. D. Clemens made a motion to have the BTA sponsor the annual BTA Scholarship Golf Tournament. Seconded by D. D'Uva, the motion passed unanimously.
2. Pay Shortage Grievances and Potential Settlement-
a. K. Atwell distributed a copy of Article XXVI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and a handout detailing pay shortages suffered by nine BTA members (all names were kept confidential to maintain anonymity). Atwell reviewed the two different reasons why the nine employees were underpaid. The issue that seven of the teachers are dealing with is longevity payments while the other two had step issues.
b. Atwell stated that she has discussed the issue with NYSUT at both regional and state levels. What she has learned is that the grievances could be denied because technically our contract states that grievances must be filed within 30 days of the incident. New York state law states that monies can only be paid back to the start date of the current contract (which would be 2007 in our case).
c. If the BTA decides to go to arbitration this would be quite expensive since each incidence of underpayment could be heard as individual cases. The cost of arbitrations varies between \$500 to \$1,000 per day. The cost would be split in half between the district and the BTA. NYSUT would then pay half of the BTA's total expenses.
d. Most of the payroll errors have been rectified back to September 2009 which is already past the 30 Day mark.
e. Atwell will be meeting with the Superintendent and District Lawyer on January 19th to try to work on a settlement between the district and the employees.
f. T. Clemens suggested that we do not combine arbitrations so that it would increase the cost and thus make it more attractive to the district to settle. J. Matus stated that in theory that might work but NYSUT could decide to not support any further arbitrations after the first one is lost.
g. Atwell made the following proposal to the district: Repayment of two years of back pay, an agreement that the BTA members would not bring any further pay issues to the district which are past 30 days, and to amend the contract

language to have longevity begin at hire date in BCSD. Current members would be grandfathered in (thus their longevity would remain as it is currently written in the contract).

- h. The last day for teachers to come forward with pay issues is January 15th.
- i. J. Cervone asked for further clarification of why longevity has become an issue in the district. Atwell explained that previously people were hired on elevated steps when they entered the district. This then became an issue when the employees reached the point of their 19th longevity and they were not paid because the district did not give them credit for the employee's previous service.
- j. M. Carpenter stated that he believes that the members need to take a greater responsibility in verifying that their paychecks are correct.
- k. B. Atwell stated that the best that the BTA could get according to State Law is two years. In negotiations there must be a give and take.
- l. K. Atwell mentioned that if the BTA loses in arbitration, it will affect our employees in the future.
- m. J. Burns thanked K. Atwell for "going after the district". He stated that he believes that the BTA should try to make the best deal that "we can for us". He said that we should ask the district to take the money that is owed and "throw it into the welfare trust fund". (We do not currently have a welfare trust fund)
- n. T. Clemens stated that he is in favor of removing contract language once an agreement has been made.
- o. K. Atwell also said that she wants have part of the settlement include putting into place new ways of ensuring we are paid correctly at the beginning of the school year.
- p. D. Clemens made a motion to sign a Memorandum of Agreement that would reword the language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement under Article XXVI (26) Salary, Letter E #1 b, to exclude "plus the number of years of experience credit awarded at the time of initial employment" and add 'effective date June 30, 2010 or after'. The motion was seconded by D. D'Uva.
- q. T. Clemens made a motion to amend the original motion to include "Contingent upon a salary agreement settlement between the BTA and the Beacon City School District". The motion was seconded by D. D'Uva. The motion passed.
- r. The Representative Assembly then voted on the original motion, with the amendment. The motion passed with 17 yes votes and 1 abstention.

Officer Reports:

TREASURER: Jeff Matus

Balances as of January 5, 2010-

Account	Balance
Checking	\$23,330.01
Savings	\$30,653.84
CD	\$19,214.16
Total:	\$73,198.01
Dental	\$3,517.78

- Matus closed the BTA's account with Key Bank and deposited the money from the two CD's which were held at Key Bank into the BTA account at Chase Bank. Now the BTA only has accounts at Chase Bank. These accounts are listed under Matus' and K. Atwell's names. There were difficulties in completing this action since there was only a first name on the account previously.
- 1099 forms for people whose union salaries are over \$600 in 2009 will be handed out by the end of January.
- The BTA audit was completed and has been turned in to NYSUT. The records will be posted on the web.

SECRETARY: Dawn Clemens

- There will be a General Membership meeting on January 21st at 4pm at the BHS Theater. Topics of discussion will include: salary issues, budget cuts, and professional behavior. Everyone is urged to attend.
- The Executive Committee set dates for Pre-Contract Building level discussions. The dates are as follows:
 - o RMS- 3/1 after the faculty meeting
 - o BHS- 3/8 at 2:30 pm in the Community Room
 - o Glenham- 4/5 at 3:30 pm
 - o JVF- 4/19 at 3:30 pm
 - o South Ave- 5/10 at 3:30 pm
 - o Sargent- 5/17 at 3:30 pm

VICE PRESIDENT: Diane D'Uva

- D'Uva has begun compiling seniority lists for special areas including music, art, foreign language, physical education, and guidance. This is being done in preparation for potential teaching cuts. The BTA wants to ensure that if people are laid off that they are the correct people to be laid off. D'Uva stated that she requires assistance in getting elementary seniority lists because there are a large variety of certification areas. She needs the date of hire, certification area, and the dates of any leaves taken.

- Additionally, approximately one-third of non coaching supplemental forms have been returned. These are crucial for us for contract negotiations. If you have not yet turned in your form, please do so.

PRESIDENT: Kim Atwell

- Budget Cuts- Atwell attended the Finance Committee Meeting on 1/4/10. She will be sending out the dates of future meetings and urges teachers to attend these meetings. Atwell gave the RA a preliminary information sheet which will be discussed more at a later date. The Finance Committee is comprised of four Board members, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Charlie Symon.
 - o Atwell stated that “we need to be worried” about future cuts. She has been assured that there will be no cuts for the remainder of this school year but that BCSD faces a budget shortfall of \$1.4 million next school year.
 - o The District will create a plan of action which may include reducing summer school or not having summer school (Atwell proposed having Beacon students pay, this is illegal because of our status as a low income district). There may be cuts in positions including assistant coaches (savings of \$24-28 thousand), art, music, special education, physical education, the BACE Program, and pre-K. There will likely be cuts in teaching assistants, clerical staff, and administrators. Class sized will likely be increased especially since enrollment is going up. The district is trying to keep programs in place for the students.
 - o Charlie Symon mentioned at the Finance Committee meeting that building usage may be affected, the possibility of cutting third shift custodians, and having community building usage only at BHS.
 - o Atwell affirmed that she would inform the membership as soon as final decisions are made. The BTA will be checking on seniority lists to ensure that people get cut who should be cut.
 - o Atwell also said that we will be seeing consolidation which will result in teachers being transferred to other buildings.
- Professionalism- Problems with professionalism have reached “epidemic proportions”. Teachers MUST remain professional in their behavior towards students (including inappropriate language and “friending”), use of district email (BCSD has the ability to flag language), driving students, physical contact, etc. She reminded the RA that one teacher can become the representative for all of us. The Superintendent will not tolerate that kind of behavior and your job could be a stake.
 - o Atwell reminded the RA that all teachers are mandated reporters; which includes things that happen to their students with other teachers. She stated that you are not “ratting” people out and that you are required to answer questions from your administrator.
- Paycheck Assistance- The RA expressed interest in holding another Paycheck Assistance Day. Atwell will inform the membership of when this will take place.
- Contract Negotiations- The chronology of negotiations was reviewed. Atwell is hoping to have a team in place by the spring. She urged members to contact her if they are interested in participating and reminded the group that being a part of the negotiations team will require a lot of time including meetings over the summer.
 - o Pre Contract Building Sessions- Atwell hopes to have a handout with targeted questions for membership to ask.

Committee Reports:

MEMBERSHIP: Dawn Clemens

- Current membership is 269
- Reminder that the Achieving Tenure ELT is on 1/26 and that the Effective Discipline Strategies ELT is on 4/20. If you are interested in attending, contact Amanda Conover.

CONSTITUTION: Dawn Clemens – Clemens is looking for feedback on how well the constitution is working. A meeting will take place in February.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Dawn Clemens

- Clemens spoke at the 12/14 Board of Education meeting about some of the PR items that the BTA is working on which will have an impact on the community including:
 - o Pancake Breakfast- this will be free for Beacon Senior Citizens and the tentative date is 3/21
 - o Book Swap- will be in conjunction with the Spring Parent University on March 4th. Please consider donating some books.
 - o Edweek.org- Clemens is perusing getting a district site license which would entitle all teachers, administrators, and support staff access to the site. She will be looking to split the cost with the district or to get a grant to pay for the cost.
- Newsletter- there were few submissions for the December edition. Please feel free to submit articles at any time. Additionally, Clemens will be attending the first annual Journalism Awards Celebration and Conference sponsored by NYSUT on March 27th.
- The next apparel order will be in late March or early April

ELECTION: Diane D’Uva—No report

GRIEVANCE: Diane D’Uva—There are five grievances tabled at Stage II; all relating to pay. Four additional grievances will be filed.

BUDGET: Jeff Matus

- The Budget Committee will be meeting in February.

SCHOLARSHIP: Dave Ryley

- The committee is continuing to raise money and will be meeting during February.

POLITICAL ACTION: Charlotte Sypher

- The committee is beginning to work on school board elections and will be asking the RA to endorse candidates.
- Sypher also mentioned that she has been attending local labor meetings.

SOCIAL: Jennifer Fisher

- 100th Night will be taking place on 2/18 (snow date 2/19) at the Dutchess Manor from 4-8pm. Cost for members is still being worked on. Retirees, teachers celebrating 25 years in the district, and teachers who received tenure in the past year will be honored.
- Rock of Ages (Broadway musical) tentative date is 3/13.
- Fisher is planning a Bowling Tournament in April. Proceeds would benefit the BTA Scholarship Fund. This would take place at the Hoe Bowl in Wappingers from 4-7pm.
- Rock Band College Night information will be forthcoming.

TECHNOLOGY: Bill Castaldi

- USB storage drives were purchased for the webmasters (Castaldi and T. Burns to share), treasurer, and secretary.
- Castaldi signed up all of the members of the RA with secure webmail through Beaconteachers.org
- Castaldi stated that he believes that the President should have a blackberry for union business. Matus stated that he looked into this and that it would not be much more money to get all of the officers a blackberry. T. Clemens wondered what the benefit would be for all four of the officers to have a blackberry.

RETIREMENT: Gina Fontenot

- There will not be a retirement seminar for "newer" teachers due to lack of interest.
- There are still spots available for the retirement seminar being held on March 8th for teachers with 10 years or less until retirement.
- The first retirement newsletter is complete and be sure to be on the lookout for it.

DENTAL: Kim Atwell

- Atwell is scheduling a date for an insurance broker to meet with the district, the district does not want to spend money on a consultant. BCSD is already paying money for broker fees without getting the services of a broker thus a broker will not cost the district any extra money.

Building Reports:

BHS: Congratulations to Mr. DiMarco for getting an extension through June as building principal. Please use appropriate judgment when using the district email and with behavior towards students. The Paycheck Assistance day was effective.

GLENHAM: Congratulations to Alicia Falman on the birth of her child! Rooms were not cleaned over vacation and are not being cleaned on a regular basis. The principal has been told and is addressing the issue and writing a report. The evening ship is the issue. Snow removal is atrocious in the sidewalks and parking lot. They are icy and not shoveled. The principal was notified and she is frustrated as well and spoke with Rus. K. Atwell advised the possibility of a grievance after going to the Superintendent and will put the issue on the agenda for District Advisory.

JVF: There are leaky roof issues. Building reps have been told that the district is in the "process of trouble shooting". Tarps have been put into place but leaks remain. There has been an issue with a door where children and parents have fallen but nothing has been done about the problem. This has been an issue for two years. Snow and ice is problematic. The custodians are working as hard as they can outside. Inside, cleanliness is an issue especially with the toilets. They have been described as "rancid".

RMS: The fire inspection went well. Ice has not been properly removed from the parking lot and refreezes. Teachers are still looking for the copier which they were promised. Members are still concerned about payroll issues.

SARGENT: Everything is fine except for concerns over the parking lot being icy.

SOUTH AVE.: Everything is going well.

New Business:

- The BTA will be working on endorsing School Board candidates. There will be three vacancies this May: Melissa Thompson, Mary-Beth Stephens, and Carla Pettorossi are not running for reelection.
 - The BTA needs to use our political power and VOTE COPE money to endorse candidates.
 - K. Atwell stated that she would like to form a committee and a coalition with some of the other unions in the district to work to elect pro-education candidates.
 - If you have a suggestion of someone who would be a good candidate, it is okay to approach them and parents are fine to approach as well.
 - Castaldi suggested adding biographical information on the BTA website for endorsed candidates.

- Atwell stated that we need to take control since our contract is up soon and the next few years are going to be really tough.

The next meeting of the BTA Representative Assembly (RA) will take place on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 in the Community Room at BHS. The meeting will start at 3:45pm.

All business having been completed, Roe Greco made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bill Castaldi. Kim Atwell adjourned the meeting at 6:32 pm.

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