



Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day



Minutes of the BTA Representative Assembly Meeting: November 3, 2009

Kim Atwell- President	Elizabeth Hanrahan- JVF- <i>excused</i>	Charlotte Sypher- NYSUT Delegate- <i>excused</i>
Diane D'Uva- Vice President	Terri Losito- JVF	Donna Glynn- Mid Hudson Teacher Center Liaison- <i>absent</i>
Jeff Matus- Treasurer	Alicia Falman- Glenham	Dave Ryley- Scholarship- <i>excused</i>
Dawn Clemens- Secretary	Donna Snowden- Glenham	John Burns- VOTE/COPE
Bobby Atwell- BHS	Matt Carpenter- Sargent	Jennifer Fisher- Social
Bill Castaldi- BHS	Jane Cervone- Sargent	Gina Fontenot- Retirement
Tom Clemens- RMS- <i>excused</i>	Kelly Bender- South Avenue	
Roe Greco- RMS	Lisa Biersack- S. Avenue- <i>excused</i>	

President Kim Atwell called the meeting to order at 3:50 pm in the Community Room at BHS. Dawn Clemens made a motion to accept the minutes from the October 6, 2009 meeting. Seconded by Bill Castaldi, the motion passed unanimously.

Officer Reports:

TREASURER: Jeff Matus Balances as of November 3, 2009-

Account	Balance
Checking	\$11,056.89
Savings	\$23,776.48
CD #1	\$19,214.16
CD #2	\$3,334.39
CD #3	\$3,334.39
Total:	\$64,992.94

- The BTA is filing for an automatic three month extension for our taxes because the accountant Matus met with would charge a high fee for his services. We will now have until February 15, 2010 to file.
- BTA audit will be started shortly and will be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- The major expense this month was DCUTC in the amount of \$1,412.25 for dues and public relations for members.
- Dental is in the positive but the number may change as we decide whether or not the district will take over dental.

SECRETARY: Dawn Clemens

- The current membership is at 269.
- D. Clemens asked building reps to check their email distribution lists to make sure that all of the teachers are included.

VICE PRESIDENT: Diane D'Uva

- D'Uva mentioned that there was a child care rights article in the October newsletter which can also be found on the BTA website (beaconteachers.org). She urged everyone to familiarize themselves with what they are entitled to.
- During October's meeting, D'Uva mentioned the idea of doing something for when members have children. A discussion followed about the concern of opening a can of worms (for example: what about weddings, deaths, etc.?) It was stated that focusing on members who are having children would illustrate that we're on the right path with child care rights. It was pointed out that last year people who were mentioned in the "Well Wishes" section of the newsletter received Alps chocolates. The committee decided that they want to continue to do the well wishes in the newsletter and that we need to work on communicating that to the members. D'Uva will be sending out information about this in the coming weeks.
- If you are working towards your professional certification D'Uva urged members to look at the links provided on the BTA website to know what is required of you.
- As a follow up to email D'Uva sent to RMS and BHS about duties, reminder to follow disciplinary protocol set forth by admin during your duty. This does not include our duty free lunch periods.

- D'Uva also reminded the RA that taking attendance for extra curriculums (such as clubs and organizations) is not considered to be a change in working conditions and requires no additional work. Simply have students sign in at the beginning of the meeting. The reason the district is requiring this is because they are looking at clubs' participation numbers to determine if certain groups could be cut if there is a budget shortfall. cuts

**PRESIDENT:** Kim Atwell

- Atwell welcomed Jen Vasil (RMS) as our new AFT delegate and John Burns (BHS) as our new NYSUT delegate
- November is open enrollment for health insurance. Our current plans are NYSHIP (Empire Plan), MVP, and CDPHP. If you want to change contact Margaret Ann Cavalluzzi at ext. 2032.
- Health Insurance: Atwell is starting to investigate our health insurance options to better understand our insurance. Currently the district does not have a consultant or expert. Margaret Ann Cavalluzzi is a district secretary who handles the health insurance.
  - o Atwell asked the district for contact numbers for health insurance reps and they only had info for MVP and CDPHP. Atwell will be in contact with reps and is looking for someone to come down for NYSHIP to do a Q & A for health insurance in November.
  - o We do not currently have rates for insurance plans.
  - o Atwell is working to get reps so that the membership can be educated; which is something that other districts do for their members. We should have the ability to know the side by side comparison of costs, co-pays, prescriptions, etc.
  - o There have been members who have questions about health insurance and retirement. Atwell stated that she will be working to gather information so that they will have more information.
  - o Atwell has a meeting scheduled for Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup> with a health insurance consultant to discuss long term trends, benefits, premiums, cost effectiveness for each plan.
    - We will be looking at other health insurance plans including: DEHIC health insurance plan (Dutchess Educational Health Insurance Consortium) which uses Blue Cross Blue Shield. NYSHIP uses Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Health Care.
  - o When retiring, the percentage you pay for health insurance remains with you in retirement. If the district and union decided to negotiate different carriers then retirees would also have to change carriers.
  - o Atwell stated that she will be looking at different companies because it is her job as president of our organization and that this does not mean that plans will be changing.
- Mid Year Cuts: Atwell asked building reps to encourage members to go to <http://www.nysut.org> (on the left hand side, click on Legislative Action Center) to send e-faxes to our state legislators. She asked building reps to email membership once a week to encourage them to write since mid year cuts were averted last year due to pressure from NYSUT.
  - o The school district is looking at mandated vs. non-mandated areas of instruction, undersubscribed classes, clubs, teams, etc. As the budget becomes tighter, these items will be reevaluated in the future.
  - o NYS governor will be coming out with info about potential budget cuts hopefully by 11/10/09 which must be approved by the state legislature.
  - o There are predictions that next year's budget will be worse off than our current year. This creates even more concern as next year is the BTA's contract year.
- AFLAC Cancer Insurance: 11/3/09 was the last day to sign up and if you didn't get a receipt when you signed up you will be getting a receipt and policy in the mail. The plan will be effective as of 12/1/09.
  - o This was a preliminary enrollment and in the spring there will be another enrollment. Every year we will have enrollment in the spring which will mean that an enrollee cannot discontinue their coverage until spring.
  - o If you are already enrolled you do not have to do anything to re-sign up. If you are going to do a cancer screening (\$75 reimbursement is available through AFLAC) you cannot do until after January 1, 2010.
- Payroll Issues: Atwell will be meeting monthly with Anne Marie Quartironi to discuss payroll issues. The confidential secretary position was posted and the district will be interviewing shortly. It is hoped that this will help improve communications. Mary Esposito is now the payroll clerk.
  - o The 403b issue has been resolved from the 9/25 paycheck. The remittance of money was done later than usual but was not a violation of our rights as the IRS regulations state that the district has 15 business days from the end of the month to remit money into a 403b account. This should not be a problem in the future.
- Longevity: The language in the contract states that longevity payments shall be granted based on years of service in the district plus years of service outside of district. There are currently teachers who have not been properly paid their longevity. For example, one member was hired on Step 5; they should still have gotten their first longevity after 19 years of TEACHING. A few members have lost a significant amount of money due to improper payment of longevity.
  - o Retroactive pay is difficult to get back but the BTA is working with the district to correct members' current status. Many of these situations are considered "dual fault" because both the district and the employees made the mistake.

Diane D'Uva discussed her situation as far as not getting credited for her years outside of Beacon because of advice she had gotten from union leadership at the time.

**-Miscellaneous Salary Concerns:**

- o Advice: When your salary notification sheet comes out, check your personnel file to make sure that you are on the correct step before signing it.
- o The BTA leadership is working on creating a "how to read your paycheck" seminar. The possibility of doing a Q & A session without judgment was discussed.
- o It was also suggested that there should be a seminar to go over the major items of our contract since many mistakes have been made because people are unaware of what they are entitled to.
- o Another idea that was discussed was having an afternoon where Bobby Atwell (building rep, BHS) and Jeff Matus (BTA Treasurer) would be in the community room at BHS to meet with people on an individual basis to go over their paychecks.
- o We were reminded to not just check your paycheck year to year but from paycheck to paycheck.
- o An additional proposal was to create a "BTA Clean-Up Day" where members could review how to read their paycheck, longevity eligibility, and child rearing rights. K. Atwell mentioned that Valley Central provides members with a timeline for financial information. A difficulty that was noted was that our paystubs vary among the membership.

**Committee Reports:**

**MEMBERSHIP:** Dawn Clemens

- Clemens is still in the process of reconciling membership information from the district with the information from NYSUT.
- Clemens asked the building reps to please notify her if there are new members in their buildings.

**CONSTITUTION:** Dawn Clemens – Reminder that meetings will begin for this committee during the second half of the school year.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Dawn Clemens

- The BTA Scholarship Raffle raised just under \$500
- The BTA presented our school board members with chocolates and a card on 10/26 which was well received
- Apparel orders are due by 11/16. If you need a form, please see the BTA website
- The due date for articles for the December newsletter is 12/4
- The PR Committee is organizing SRP (School Related Professional) Day recognition. We are planning on handing out cards. This will take place on 11/17.
- Clemens will be attending a DCUTC PR meeting to apply for a Public Relations grant. The PR Committee expressed interest in doing something for senior citizens in the Beacon community.
- Clemens asked the BTA leadership to take a larger role in Public Relations since it can contribute to passing our school budget and gaining support in our upcoming contract negotiations.
  - o Bill Castaldi suggested revisiting a previous feature of the BTA newsletter called Apples and Worms. It was decided that we would only focus on the "apples" or good things that are happening throughout our district. If you have an Apple for the newsletter, please send it to Bill Castaldi. It does not need to be an article and can be submitted in bulleted format.

**ELECTION:** Diane D'Uva—Welcome to John Burns and Jen Vasil in their new positions as NYSUT and AFT delegates.

**GRIEVANCE:** Diane D'Uva

- There were two grievances which went to Stage III dealing with supplemental pay increases. The grievance concerning coaches being entitled to an 8.25% pay increase during their third year of service was sustained. This grievance was won because evidence of past practice was presented and the language was clear.
  - o The non coaching supplemental of 7% pay increase during the third year of service was denied. This occurred because there was no proof of past practice. The recommendation was that the BTA to not go to arbitration because of vague contractual wording and no evidence to support a consistent pattern.
  - o Members are advised to check their paychecks (and board approval notes) to make sure that they are getting their increase in 3<sup>rd</sup> year (for coaches) and 4<sup>th</sup> year for non coaching supplementals.
  - o A question arose about whether coaches should be getting new board appointment letters even if season has ended (for coaches that the grievance applies to).
  - o Another question was asked as to whether or not hourly positions (such as chaperones, summer school) are entitled to the 7% pay increase after 4 years of service. Atwell stated that yes all non coaching supplemental are entitled to 7%. Group 8 in our contract was precluded in the previous contract. There is a problem with the contractual language to know if you chaperone a specific event or just chaperoning in general would entitle you to the pay increase. Atwell counseled members to keep a file of paperwork relating to non coaching supplemental to make sure

that they are getting paid the correct amount. She added that when putting in claim for payment members should be sure to add in 7% for every series of three and tell how many years you have been in the position. The burden of proof is on the member.

**BUDGET:** Jeff Matus – The Budget Committee will meet in late December/early January to begin discussions for the 2010-2011 budget.

**SCHOLARSHIP:** Dave Ryley

- The current plan is for the BTA to award three scholarships this year totaling \$1,000 each.

**POLITICAL ACTION:** John Burns

- The Political Action Committee had their first meeting. There are differences in opinion as to what the focus of the committee should be: labor issues vs. VOTE/COPE
- J. Burns is currently working on the fall contribution drive for VOTE/COPE. His goal is to encourage those who did not contribute last year to contribute this year, for those who contributed via check to change to payroll deduction, and for those who did payroll deduction last year to increase their deductions.
  - o Burns distributed VOTE/COPE forms to the building reps with letters attached with a check off for options for contributions. If you are not making a change in your deduction than you do not need to fill out anything.
  - o The goal is to get everyone on the RA to contribute. Over half of the membership contributed last year.
  - o It was suggested to have a friendly competition between the buildings to see who could get the highest percentage of contributors.

**SOCIAL:** Jennifer Fisher

- The fall get together will be held on 11/6. There will be a 50/50 raffle held to benefit the BTA Scholarship Fund.
- The BTA covered the cost for the Knights of Columbus and for the DJ.

**TECHNOLOGY:** Bill Castaldi

- The website has a lot of valuable information available for the membership.
- Castaldi stated that he and Tom Burns have been able to speed up the turnaround for information to be posted quickly.

**RETIREMENT:** Gina Fontenot

- There will be an article on retirement in each edition of the newsletter (check out the article from the October newsletter)
- Fontenot and Atwell will be going to the NYSTRS convention this weekend and there will be more information to follow.
- There are still openings for the March Retirement Seminar to be held at BHS. Contact Gina Fontenot if you are interested in attending.
  - o There was a request to have a seminar for newbies to ensure that things are off on the right foot for retirement. This could possibly take place in the spring or next fall.

**DENTAL:** Kim Atwell

- We are currently in transition with dental. Donna Snowden, Jeff Matus, and Kim Atwell will be meeting with Anne Marie Quartironi on 11/4 to discuss the possibility of the district taking over dental.
- We are currently losing money with dental and our members could possibly save money if the district takes over administration of the plan.

### **Building Reports:**

**BHS:** Things are going well. There are issues with AIS program (academic intervention services) which is supposed to be giving extra support to students who have received low test scores on state examinations. From an administrative standpoint we are behind where we were supposed to be as we are now in the process of filling those courses. The BASE program is underway. This program offers courses to students on superintendent's suspension or to students who are behavioral issues. The program runs at RMS from 2:30-6:00pm. Also, BHS would like to welcome Assistant Principal leave replacement Brian Soltish.

**GLENHAM:** The Superintendent's Conference day was productive and things are going well in the building.

**JVF:** The building is thankful for the other buildings' Building Advisory Committee meeting minutes. As a result they are pursuing having desks cleaned once a week. E. Hanrahan is working on gaining a computer for the building's faculty room. They had previously asked to have a computer in a room where the faculty congregates. There was a question about the possibility of a grievance being filed but the contract language is very vague. Having a computer in the faculty room will be helpful for support staff who do not have regular access to a computer. Additionally, the Superintendent's Conference day was very productive.

**RMS:** The staff wanted to bring attention to the issues with the video on demand system. They are encouraged by notification that the district is working to fix the problem. There were individual salary issues and those who are affected are keeping the building reps updated. Lastly, they are still waiting for a new copier which was promised.

**SARGENT:** There was an issue with a janitor not doing a good job cleaning the top floor. This was brought to the principal and now new janitors are working on the top floor. A faculty member had a problem with their paycheck and they were successful in correcting the error by going over to the board office. In addition, the Superintendent's Conference day was very useful and appreciated.

**SOUTH AVE.:** There is currently a committee planning a retirement party for Ophelia Richards. This party will be open to people throughout the district and will probably take place in January. Ronnie Damboragian is heading up the committee and more information regarding the party will be coming. A tree was donated to the school in Ophelia's honor. Finally, the staff felt that the Superintendent's Conference day was very productive and they would like to see the same format to be used later in the school year.

**Old Business:**

- The new BTA Conference form (which members would need to fill out if they would be attending a union conference) was approved. This form includes a pre-approval component and a reimbursement component. John Burns made the motion to approve the form which was seconded by Donna Snowden. The motion passed.

**New Business:**

- Bill Castaldi spoke on behalf of the Technology Committee. He stated that there is no central place for secure storage of data and the difficulty that because files are currently being saved on various personal computers access is limited. Castaldi would like to look into purchasing three 4GB USB flash drives (one for our treasurer, one for our Secretary, and one for the website administrators). This drive would allow for ease of passing of information and ease of backing up information. Three of these devices would cost between \$75-\$85 in total. These drives are small and relatively inexpensive and would last several years.
  - o John Burns made a motion for a maximum of \$100 to be spent on purchasing the three drives. This was seconded by Terri Losito.
  - o Jeff Matus made another motion for the money to be taken out of the miscellaneous expenses line item of the BTA budget. This was seconded by Bobby Atwell.
  - o Bill Castaldi made the motion to amend the original motion to include the budget line for the expenditure. This was seconded by Diane D'Uva.
  - o All motions passed and thus were approved by the Representative Assembly.
- Kim Atwell brought up that she will be reaching out to the RA as we prepare for preliminary pre-negotiations. A lot of work needs to be done on the contract, especially with language. Additionally research needs to be done as well and we have to be able to balance needs vs. wants. Currently Dutchess County is trying to stick together as far as contract negotiations because if one district caves in our administration will pressure us to do the same. This will not be a roll over contract. Atwell said that supplemental could be an area of concern. She envisions creating a formula for pay and qualifications.
  - o The RA needs to come together as a team to work on the contract. Atwell believes that the biggest issues will be pay increases, health insurance, and time.
  - o Atwell promised that negotiations will not be secretive and that people will have the ability to ask questions throughout the process.
  - o The negotiations team will be picked hopefully before summer starts (the BTA Constitution says the team must be in place by November).

The next meeting of the BTA Representative Assembly (RA) will take place on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 in the **Faculty Room at RMS**. The meeting will start at 3:45pm.

All business having been completed, Bill Castaldi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Donna Snowden. Kim Atwell adjourned the meeting at 6:10 pm.

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