

**Illinois Community College District No. 511  
Rock Valley College  
3301 North Mulford Road  
Rockford, IL 61114  
Advanced Technology Center, Room 1300 For This Meeting Only**

**ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING  
October 24, 2023, 5:45 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

The Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Ogle, and Stephenson Counties, Illinois convened in Room 1300 in the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), 1400 Big Thunder Blvd., Belvidere, IL, on Tuesday, October 24, 2023. Board Chair Gloria Cardenas Cudia called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia  
Mr. Paul Gorski  
Student Trustee Juan Noguera

Mr. Bob Trojan  
Mr. John Nelson  
Ms. Crystal Soltow arrived at 5:55 p.m.

The following trustees were absent: Mr. Richard Kennedy, Ms. Kristen Simpson.

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Liberal Arts and Adult Education/Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President Industry Partnerships and Community Engagement; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Betsy Saucedo, Assistant to the President; Attorney Joseph Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

**Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)**

RVC President Dr. Howard Spearman announced that Ms. Kay Ostberg had signed in to address the Board of Trustees, but since she had not yet returned from a tour of the Advanced Technology Center, the Public Comment section of the meeting would be delayed until her return.

**Recognition of Visitors**

There were no visitors to be recognized.

**General Presentations**

There were no general presentations.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting and the September 26, 2023 Regular meeting.

There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**Action Items**

**1. BR 8094 – Claims Sheet**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the claims sheets from the Ellucian check register for the period from September 1, 2023 to September 30, 2023. The total is \$3,568,870.39.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8094.

Vice President Ellen Olson confirmed that no changes have been made since the October 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**2a. BR 8095-A – Purchase Report-A – FY2024 Amendments**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked items for purchase on Board Report 8095-A, Purchase Report-A.

\$	4,000.00	A. Marco Technologies, LLC, Rockford, IL
\$	319.32	B. Meridian, Loves Park, IL

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve Board Report 8095-A, Purchase Report-A.

Vice President Ellen Olson confirmed that no changes have been made since the October 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**2b. BR 8095-B – Purchase Report-B – FY2024 Purchases**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked items for purchase on Board Report 8095-B, Purchase Report-B.

\$	16,331.46	A. B & H Photo, New York, NY
\$	12,452.35	B. Duclos Lenses, Chatsworth, CA
	Not to Exceed	
\$	19,635.00	C. Midwest Commercial Fitness, Aurora, IL
\$	15,000.00	D. Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL
	Not to Exceed	
\$	10,000.00	E. NCS Pearson, Inc., Bloomington, MN
	Not to Exceed	
\$	12,950.00	F. UWorld, LLC, Coppell, TX
	Not to Exceed	
\$	13,448.00	G. Midwest Painting and Decorating, Loves Park, IL
\$	55,156.39	H. SEPS, Inc., Burr Ridge, IL
	Not to Exceed	
\$	12,436.02	I. SEPS, Inc., Burr Ridge, IL
	Not to Exceed	
\$	60,000.00	J. Mechanical Inc., DBA Helm Service, Freeport, IL
	Not to Exceed	
\$	49,680.00	K. Benchmark Flooring Inc., Loves Park, IL
\$	11,726.72	L. Mutual of Omaha, Omaha, NE

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve Board Report 8095-B.

Vice President Ellen Olson described the changes made to Items A., J., and K. since the October 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**3. BR 8096 – Levy Year 2023 Estimated Taxes Required and Setting Hearing Date for Truth-in-Taxation Hearing**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the estimates for the amount of taxes necessary to be raised by taxation for the year 2023 as follows:

Educational Purposes – Fund 01	\$17,458,376
Operations and Maintenance Purposes – Fund 02	3,036,239
Protection, Health, Life, or Safety – Fund 03	1,500,000
Financial Audit Purposes – Fund 11	64,000
Liability Protection Settlement Fund – Fund 12	0
Liability Insurance/Tort & Risk Management	1,570,000
Social Security and Medical Insurance	430,000
<b>Total Tax Levy</b>	<b>\$24,058,615</b>

This represents a 6.020% increase over the 2022 Tax Levy. To provide public disclosure, a hearing on the proposed 2023 Tax Levy under the Truth in Taxation law of the State of Illinois will be held on November 21, 2023, at 5:15 p.m. in the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR), on the main campus of Rock Valley College at 3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, Illinois. Rock Valley College will publish the Notice of said hearing as required by Statute.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Gorski, to approve Board Report 8096.

Vice President Olson confirmed that no changes have been made since the October 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting. She added that the purpose of this board report is to provide advance notice and to set the date for the Truth in Taxation Hearing on November 21, 2023. Following the hearing, the Board will be asked to vote on the final 2023 tax levy. There was no further discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**4. BR 8097 – 2023-2024 Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321 and Rock Valley College**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321 and Rock Valley College beginning August 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024.

**Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8097. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**5. BR 8098 – 2023-2024 Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement – Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement with Pecatonica Community unit School District #321 effective upon approval and signature of both parties. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8098. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**6. BR 8099 – 2023-2024 Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) – Durand Community Unit School District #322**

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement with Durand Community Unit School District #322 effective upon approval and signature of both parties. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Board Report 8099. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

**Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)**

The public comment portion of the meeting was presented at this time, as the speaker, Kay Ostberg, returned to the meeting following a tour of the Advanced Technology Center. Ms. Ostberg represented a group to eliminate racism, and spoke in support of the proposed new location in downtown Rockford.

Trustee Crystal Soltow arrived at 5:55 p.m.

**Other Business**

**1. New Business**

1. President Spearman announced that the Administration would like to hold a Board retreat and the State of the College presentation on Saturday, January 20, 2024. A secondary date is January 27. The meeting will be held in person on campus, and breaks will be built into the agenda. As done in the past, a video of the State of the College will be sent to trustees in advance of the meeting to allow time to review the presentation and submit their questions, which will be addressed at the retreat.

2. Dr. Spearman also noted that Saturday, April 20, 2024 is a possible date for the Board retreat from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). The College was awarded the complimentary retreat in a nationwide, random drawing. Board Chair Cudia will contact trustees regarding possible topics to be covered.

3. Board Chair Cudia announced that although it may seem early, as the reorganization meeting is not until April 2024, she will be contacting trustees to ascertain interest in holding an officer position.

**2. Unfinished Business**

Dr. Spearman introduced Chief Operations Officer Rick Jenks who provided a presentation to help determine the best location for the Automotive program. This is in response to questions that trustees asked at the October 17 Special Meeting regarding whether to put the Automotive program in the new downtown Rockford facility or at the Advanced Technology Center.

**Questions, Answers and Comments:**

- Trustee: Does Automotive need its own classrooms, or could the program use classrooms already in the ATC? No, Automotive could not use existing classroom space at the ATC, as it is full. Finding available classroom space at the ATC is currently a challenge.

- Trustee: Can a mobile unit be used for off-site classrooms? Yes, that is in the cost/sq. ft. area.

- Administration: The two architect finalists used different analysis to determine cost per square foot. OPM used 2023 values for construction projects, using four of five projects done outside of Illinois. DKA used 2024-2025 projected values using community colleges in Illinois that they worked on, some of which were CDB projects which are more expensive.

- Administration: DKA's estimate was \$475 per square foot, based on the idea that half of the proposed downtown Rockford building would be traditional classroom and community space, while the other half would be more mechanical. The cost could be reduced by using cheaper materials and technology.

- Administration: \$52 million is an estimated all-in cost. As the College goes through the process, the architects will hold focus meetings with stakeholders, then put that information into a systematic design drawing for trustees to review.

- Trustee: Why does Electric Vehicle training need to be with Automotive? Why can't Electric Vehicle training be at the ATC? College staff visited several colleges currently teaching both programs, and they recommended that both programs be in the same location, as both combustion and electric components must be

taught in the program. Having both in the same location would reduce travel time for students to get from one campus to another. It would also eliminate the need to duplicate equipment in two locations.

- Trustee: The \$52 million estimate for downtown is not palatable; \$20 million is preferred. Trustee wants to hear an explanation from the architects why the huge increase, as he's not comfortable with the explanation provided. Automotive should be at the ATC. What are the plans for the Stellantis plant?

- Trustee: Ford and GM are moving their combustion lines to electric, and thinks both will be in the same facility. Trustee also explained to the community visitors in the audience that the trustees are not debating whether or not there will be a downtown facility, but they are trying to determine how much to spend on a new building downtown as well as pay for the renovations of Classroom Building II (CLII) and still have sufficient operational funds in 2028 to run the College.

- Student Trustee: Students prefer that the Automotive and E-Vehicle programs be in the same location. Although he is pursuing a Fire Science degree, he works part-time as an automotive technician and has contacted his peers in the automotive program. These students have stated that it would be much harder for them to complete their program if they had to travel to different cities to take their classes.

- Trustee: Would like to see the E-Vehicle portion as part of a "technology center."

- Administration: Thanked trustees for their input and commented that this may not be a perfect solution, but the goal is to be transparent. As Administration identifies issues such as deferred maintenance projects that need to be addressed now, they are sharing them with trustees and trying to find a solution. Not all current technical programs are in one location, as they can be found in the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), Woodward Technology Center, and the Stenstrom Center for Career Education. Administrators are trying to find an efficient way to build a downtown location and also renovate CLII. The College is looking for the best way to serve its constituents.

- Administration: The community space planned for the Rockford downtown location could be viewed as an academic flex lab, similar to the ATC flex lab that has been used for Belvidere community events. This space can be used to attract non-traditional students, reach the underserved population of Rockford, and offer space for community engagement. Remember, K-12 has declining enrollment.

- Administration: A previous Board rejected putting the Automotive program at the ATC.

- Trustee: The Board will have some tough decisions to make in the next four to five years. Collective Bargaining Agreements will be up for renewal, and projections show the College will run out of money.

- Administration: Current bonds will be paid off in 2028. Bonding could be layered to keep the tax levy as flat as possible.

- Administration: CLII has been on the Capital Development Board (CDB) list for nearly 10 years, and the building is in dire need of renovation due to the failing HVAC system. Due to this safety hazard, the College could ask CDB to move the project to emergency status. Dr. Spearman has been speaking with local legislators to have them encourage CDB to release the funds to renovate CLII.

- Trustee: How would the College change its approach if Stellantis announces they will build E-Vehicles in Belvidere? We would meet with them to see how the College can help with customized training, just as we do when other new companies move into the area. The College is included in preliminary conversations with Growth Dimensions and may be informed of plans before they're officially announced. The College's strong relationships with industry partners are also beneficial.

- Trustee: With all Illinois colleges fighting for state funds, wouldn't it be helpful for RVC to hire its own lobbyist? Trustee spoke with State Representative Maurice West at the Legislative Breakfast, who thought it's not a bad idea. Trustee knows someone who would be good and will talk to the board chair about that.

- Trustee: The College has been working on a downtown Rockford presence since 2015, but the goal tonight is to determine the cost of putting Automotive in downtown Rockford or at the ATC in Belvidere. The staff has worked very hard to provide detailed information on this subject. The College has a commitment to non-traditional students, and Automotive should be in downtown Rockford.

- Trustee: The College was recognized nationally at the ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas earlier this month. While preparing to return to Rockford, the board chair of another community college stopped Dr. Stewart in the airport and complimented him on what RVC is doing as evidenced by the high-quality presentation at the ACCT conference.

- Administration: The College watches its budget carefully and has worked to be conservative in its spending.

- Trustee: Do not stop the process while trustees are discussing these unresolved issues.

- Trustee: Administrators provide all the information trustees ask for. Mr. Jenks has always given accurate information and is trusted.

## Updates / Reports

### 1. President's Update

President Howard Spearman provided highlights of recent college and community engagement activities.

- October 10 was Rock Valley College's 59th birthday.
- Thank you to trustees for volunteering much of their time to RVC in October. Tonight is the fourth meeting this month in addition to regular RVC events.
- The Brother to Brother conference, formerly known as the Minority Male Leadership Conference, was held October 20 with 96 participants from nine area high schools and Youth Build. Trustee Kennedy was able to attend.
- Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe, founder and CEO of the Student African American Brotherhood (SAAB), was on campus yesterday facilitating an orientation and training for SAAB.
- Trustees Cudia, Kennedy, Trojan and Nelson attended the Legislative Breakfast held October 18 in the Atrium. A two-student panel discussion was moderated by Executive Director of College Communications Jennifer Thompson.
- The RVC Foundation hosted another Alumni and Retiree Breakfast October 19 featuring a four-student panel discussion. Trustees Cudia and Trojan were able to attend.
- Compliments to Student Trustee Juan Noguera for attending so many RVC events.
- Dr. Amanda Smith, Dr. Hansen Stewart, and Trustee Cudia joined Dr. Spearman to present "Manufacturing Success Through Industry Partnerships" at the ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas earlier this month. Trustees Kristen Simpson and John Nelson also attended the conference.
- Thank you to the RVC staff who have put in many hours to facilitate all of these special events and still keep the campus functioning at same time.
- Congratulations to Trustee Bob Trojan who has been nominated for the Outstanding Philanthropist award by the Rockford chapter of AFT to be announced November 14. Dr. Spearman thanked Mr. Trojan for showing his heart and support for RVC as evidenced by the door plaque noting this classroom space as the Bob and Norma Trojan room.

### 2. Leadership Team Updates

- Vice President Jim Handley announced that the Golden Eagles Professional Development Academy will begin Friday, October 27 with senior leaders. The three-tiered plan is part of the Human Resources Strategic Plan.
- Vice President Dr. Amanda Smith announced that the RVC Testing Center offers FAA tests for all levels and received a perfect audit for the 20-plus FAA tests administered in FY2023.
- Vice President Rick Jenks reviewed completed projects around campus including repaving the SSB parking lot and the driveway to the Boiler House. Due to weather conditions, sealcoating will be done in the spring. Replacement of the drain inlets will be completed before the end of this week.
- Vice President Patrick Peyer announced that phase two of the Sales Force CRM tool has been launched and includes academic advising and tracking software. He also provided an update on fall sports including soccer tournaments to be hosted by RVC. National tournaments will be held in Arizona for soccer, and in Iowa for volleyball.
- Vice President Heather Snider announced that enrollment is up 13% for Winterim and down 12% for spring compared to this time last year. The spring term will begin January 13, 2024. The RVC Marketing and Communications team attended the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District 3 and 5 Conference last week and came home with three awards. Congratulations to all for their exceptional work! Congratulations also to Gabriela Mar-Gagula, communications and marketing specialist, for being accepted into the NCNCR National Leadership Institute. "Gabi" also won a scholarship that covers two-thirds of this year-long program. Also, Dr. Lisa Mehlig and Associate Professor Dr. Danielle Hardesty will give an assessment presentation at the national conference of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) later this month.
- Vice President Ellen Olson announced that Rock Valley College has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

Award for the sixteenth consecutive year. This award is for completion of the College's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR).

- Vice President Dr. Hansen Stewart announced that the area event celebrating October as Manufacturing Month was held at Rockford Career College this year. Due to low response, the College's manufacturing-related event planned for middle school students will be rescheduled. RVC's Traffic Safety Department has been named recipient of the 2022 Excellence in Driver Safety Training Center award by the National Safety Council. RVC was recognized for this prestigious national award on October 22 in New Orleans.

### **3. Trustee Comments**

- Trustee Gorski commented that he thinks the Board made decisions on Stenstrom and acquisition of property before they had all information on downtown. They should have asked more questions, had all information up front and thinks the Board may have done things out of order. However, he appreciates the time staff has put in on this project and the information provided.
- Trustee Nelson reviewed the 10 sessions, as well as the community college lawyers' roundtable, that he attended at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress in Las Vegas October 9-12.
- Trustee Trojan commented that he attended the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary luncheon for the Center for Learning in Retirement (CLR), noting that CLR has about 1,200 members. He acknowledged Dr. Spearman's comments on transparency that trustees have heard many times. He also appreciates Rick Jenks' presentations, noting that everyone's goal is to make the college better.
- Trustee Soltow commented that she took her daughter to a volleyball game at RVC, and her daughter had an excellent experience.
- Board Chair Cudia thanked Ann Kerwitz for her work coordinating attendance at the ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas earlier this month. She also described several sessions that emphasized "the more you learn, the more you earn" and how community colleges can look at different ways of pitching how to be a better employer. She commended everyone on their hard work.

### **4. Illinois Community College Trustees' Association (ICCTA) Report**

Trustee Nelson commented that the ICCTA delegation had a very nice hospitality reception at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Leadership Congress that he attended along with Trustees Cudia and Simpson in Las Vegas October 9-12.

### **5. Student Trustee Report**

Student Trustee Juan Noguera reported on Student Life, Student Government Association (GSA) and events related to the celebration of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. He has been working with the Belvidere Fire Department as part of his Fire Science program. He added that he is so proud to be a Golden Eagle, as he knows students will get a good quality education. To illustrate the positive impact of Rock Valley College on students, he showed a video of student club representatives explaining how being involved in student clubs has helped their educational journey.

### **6. RVC Foundation Liaison Report**

Trustee Trojan reported that the Foundation's board did not meet this month, but he did sit in on the finance committee meeting. The Foundation has received a clean audit, with no problems.

### **7. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report**

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) report was accepted as presented.

### **Adjourn to Closed Session**

At 8:02 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to adjourn to closed session for the purpose of discussing: 1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting per Section 2 (c) (1); and/or 2) Security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonably

potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public, or public property, per Section 2 (c) (8), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The motion was approved by majority roll call vote. Trustees Cudia, Soltow, and Trojan voted yes. Trustees Gorski and Nelson voted no. Student Trustee Noguera voted yes (advisory).

**Reconvene Open Session**

At 8:02 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Gorski, to adjourn the closed session and reconvene to open session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of closed session.

**Next Meeting**

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

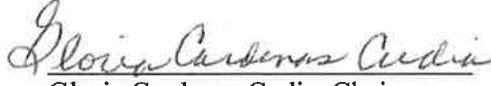
The next Regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 5:45 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

**Adjournment**

At 8:28 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz

  
Robert Trojan, Secretary

  
Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Chairperson