

**Illinois Community College District No. 511
Rock Valley College
3301 North Mulford Road
Rockford, IL 61114**

ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING

5:15 p.m., November 21, 2023

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 0214 (Performing Arts Room) in the Educational Resource Center on Tuesday, November 21, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Gloria Cardenas Cudia at 5:15 p.m.

Roll Call

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present at roll call:

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia
Mr. Richard Kennedy
Student Trustee Juan Noguera

Mr. Bob Trojan
Ms. Kristen Simpson

The following trustees were absent at roll call: Mr. John Nelson, Ms. Crystal Soltow, and Mr. Paul Gorski.

Board Secretary Bob Trojan announced there was a physical quorum, and the meeting continued.

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Liberal Arts and Adult Education/Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Mr. Keith Barnes, Vice President Equity and Inclusion; 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 Joe Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

Board Chair Cudia made a motion, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to allow Trustee Paul Gorski and Trustee Crystal Soltow to participate in the meeting via teleconference. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote. Trustee Soltow entered the meeting via telephone.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

Mr. John Messley, representing Zion Lutheran Church on behalf of Rev. Dr. Michael Thomas, addressed trustees in support of RVC building a downtown campus.

Mrs. Ann Rundall, representing Eliminate Racism, addressed trustees in support of RVC building a downtown campus. Mrs. Rundall presented petitions with over 700 signatures in support of the RVC downtown project.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

Board Chair Cudia announced that the meeting would recess to the Truth in Taxation Hearing.

TRUTH-IN-TAXATION HEARING

The Truth-in-Taxation Hearing for Rock Valley College was called to order by Board Chair Gloria Cardenas Cudia at 5:25 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2023.

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present at roll call:

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Bob Trojan
Mr. Richard Kennedy	Ms. Kristen Simpson
Student Trustee Juan Noguera	
Ms. Crystal Soltow participated via teleconference	

The following members of the Board of Trustees were absent: Mr. John Nelson, Mr. Paul Gorski.

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President Operations/Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President Liberal Arts and Adult Education/Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Jim Handley, Vice President Human Resources; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President Student Affairs; Mr. Keith Barnes, Vice President Equity and Inclusion; 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 Joe Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Vice President/Chief Financial Officer Mrs. Ellen Olson explained that the tax levy is one of the three primary sources of funding for Rock Valley College; the other two are Student Tuition and Fees, and the State of Illinois. For Fiscal Year 2024, Rock Valley College is tied for the ninth lowest tuition rate in the State of Illinois at \$125.00 per credit hour, where by statute the tuition could be as high as \$198.45 based on the Certification of Chargeback for Fiscal Year 2023.

Olson confirmed that the tax levy has not changed since reviewed at the October 24, 2023 regular Board meeting, and the Notice required by state statute was published Wednesday, November 8, 2023 and Thursday, November 9, 2023 with Rock Valley Publishing. The Notice was also available on Public Notice Illinois and has been posted on the doors of Building E and the Support Services Building on the main campus.

Olson also confirmed the following: 1) The levy request is based on an assumed six percent increase in Equalized Assessed Value (EAV); 2) The Educational and Operations and Maintenance levy is maintaining the same levy rate as in previous years. The College is asking for a levy of \$17,458,376 for Education and \$3,036,239 for Operations and Maintenance; 3) The tax levy request under Tort is \$1,570,000 for Insurance and Tort/Risk Management, \$430,000 for Social Security; 4) The tax levy request is \$64,000 for the Audit Fund, and \$1,500,000 for Protection, Health and Safety; 5) The Bond and Interest levy request of \$11,981,861 is for the bond and interest payment schedule

that has been previously submitted to the District's six counties; 6) The overall tax rate is projected to decrease by .0055 from .4803 to .4748. The total levy amount is \$36,040,476.

Board Chair Cudia noted that anyone who would like to speak at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district was to notify Vice President Olson before November 21, 2023. Mrs. Olson confirmed that the College did not receive any comments from the public.

On a motion by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, and unanimous roll call vote, the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing was closed at 5:31 p.m.

Reconvene Open Meeting

Board Chair Gloria Cudia announced that the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing was closed and the regular meeting would be reconvened. Trustee Soltow continued to participate in the meeting via teleconference.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023 Special Meeting-RVC Downtown-West Update; the October 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting and the October 24, 2023 Regular meeting.

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

Action Items

1. BR 8100 – Claims Sheet – October 2023

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 October 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023. The total is \$2,224,177.61.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8100. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2a. BR 8101-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 8101-A, Purchase Report-A.

\$ 5,000.00	A. First Student, Belvidere, IL
\$ 12,000.00	B. The Guardian Life Insurance, New York, NY
\$ 4,592.80	C. Honorlock, Boca Raton, FL

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8101-A. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote. Trustees Cudia, Kennedy, Soltow and Trojan voted yes. Trustee Simpson abstained. Student Trustee Nogueta voted yes (advisory).

2b. BR 8101-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 8101-B, Purchase Report-B.

\$ 10,994.00	A. American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, DC
\$ 69,539.97 - Not to exceed	B. Barnes and Noble, Rockford, IL
\$ 21,126.59	C. CDW-G, Chicago, IL
\$ 19,969.70 - Not to exceed	D. Jostens, Inc., Chicago, IL
\$ 12,000.00 - Not to exceed	E. Nothing Bundt Cakes, Rockford, IL
\$ 13,000.00 - Not to exceed	F. South of the Border Tours, Tucson, AZ

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8101-B.

Chief Financial officer Ellen Olson confirmed that Item F., South of the Border Tours, was added to the report since the November 7 Committee of the Whole meeting.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2. BR 8102 – Fiscal Year 2023 Audit-Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees accepts the Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Audit prepared by the independent auditing firm of Sikich, LLP.

Trustee Trojan explained to the public visitors that all of these documents were reviewed and discussed by trustees at the November 7 Committee of the Whole meeting.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8102. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR 8103 – Summary of Fiscal Year 2024 Estimated Revenues by Source for Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Stephenson, and Ogle Counties, Illinois (Rock Valley College)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Summary of Fiscal Year 2024 Estimated Revenues by Source for Rock Valley College and requests that Ellen K. Olson, the Treasurer for the College, sign the attached report.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8103. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR 8104 – Levy Year 2023 Estimated Taxes Required and Certificate of Compliance for Truth-in-Taxation Hearing

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

Educational Purposes – Fund 01 (\$.2300)	\$17,458,376
Operations and Maintenance Purposes – Fund 02 (\$.0400)	3,036,239
Protection, Health, Life, or Safety – Fund 03 (\$.0198)	1,500,000
Financial Audit Purposes – Fund 11	64,000

Liability Protection Settlement Fund – Fund 12	
Liability Insurance/Tort & Risk Management	1,570,000
Social Security and Medical Insurance	430,000
Total Tax Levy	\$24,058,615

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8104. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

5. BR 8105 – Reimbursement Resolution

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the resolution to permit reimbursement for a portion of the capital expenditures associated with the construction and equipping of the future downtown location not to exceed \$2,000,000. These items may include design costs, architecture and engineering services, demolition, and potential EPA mitigation costs. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8105.

Trustee Simpson commented that she supports the downtown project, but is not happy with the \$2 million amount and would prefer to see an itemized list before approving the amount.

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

6. BR 8106 – Personnel Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the personnel items listed on Board Report 8106.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8106. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

7. BR 8107 – Revised Academic Calendar for 2023-2024

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the revised Academic Calendar for 2023-2024 for the closure of the College and no classes from December 22, 2023 through January 1, 2024.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8107. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

8. BR 8108 – Revised Academic Calendar for 2024-2025

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the revised Academic Calendar for 2024-2025 for the closure of the College and no classes from December 24, 2024 through January 1, 2025.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8108. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

9. BR 8109 – FIRST READING Board Policy 2:10.100 Acceptance of Contributions (f/k/a Solicitation)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the renamed and revised Board Policy 2:10.100 Solicitation to affirm statutory compliance, remove the political events on campus language from the policy, and rename the policy as “Acceptance of Contributions.” **Attorney Reviewed.**

There was no discussion. Because this is a first reading, no vote was taken.

10. BR 8110 – FIRST READING Board Policy 2:30.060 – Cyber and Information Security Policy

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the creation of Board Policy 2:30.060 Cyber and Information Security Policy. **Attorney Reviewed.**

There was no discussion. Because this is a first reading, no vote was taken.

11. BR 8111 – Approval of Settlement Agreement and Release

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the Settlement Agreement and Release with former student Breenah Seivert, at which time Seivert’s claims against the College will be dismissed. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8111. In response to a question from Trustee Trojan, Attorney Joe Perkoski confirmed this agreement is with prejudice. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Other Business

1. New Business

Vice President of Finance Ellen Olson explained the tax rebate proposal received from the City of Rockford and Rockford Public Schools (RPS 205). The three-year property tax refund is for a three-year period for single and multi-family new residential construction within Rockford and the RPS 205 school district. Notice was received November 16, 2023 with a request to bring it to the RVC Board by November 22. Based on legal review, Administration does not recommend participation in the agreement.

Trustee Trojan commented that he does not support the proposal, as RVC has limited revenue sources. Vice President Olson added that the Rockford Park District voted not to participate in the tax rebate plan. There was no further discussion.

2. Unfinished Business

Dr. Spearman reminded trustees that the Administration is still looking for a date to hold the ACCT complimentary retreat. Since not all trustees are available April 13 or April 20, 2024, Administration is now looking at April 27, 2024. The president’s office will poll trustees regarding their availability on April 27 and send a list of possible discussion topics.

Updates / Reports

1. President’s Update

President Spearman provided an update on recent activities regarding community and student engagement including the following:

- Attended the Alignment Rockford Community Engagement event at Rockford University. Alignment Rockford shared their healing-centered approach to education in RPS205.
- Invited by Congressman Bill Foster to attend the visit by President Biden to Belvidere where he heard UAW members, Governor J.B. Pritzker and President Biden speak about the expected positive results of the new Stellantis-UAW contract.
- Attended the Rockford Region Cultural Plan-State of Culture presentation facilitated by the Rockford Area Arts Council. Their goal is to expand the arts throughout the city of Rockford and beyond.
- Attended the RVC Foundation Donor Luncheon and heard inspiring speeches by winners of the Kevin Rice Memorial Scholarship and the Michael D. Mahoney Scholarship.
- Spoke at one of the evening ESL classes and enjoyed the student interaction.
- Gave a special presentation titled “Fostering Authentic Diversity: Recruiting College Students with Inclusivity and Respect” for the Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers Conference in Wisconsin Dells.
- Attended the 2023 National Philanthropy Day luncheon where Trustee Bob Trojan received the Outstanding Philanthropist Award from the Association of Philanthropic Professionals. Trustee Trojan was nominated by the RVC Foundation and R2OC robotics. The full article was written by Jennifer Thompson, executive director of college communications, and can be found on RVC media outlets and the ICCTA email listserve. Trustee Trojan added that as a surprise to him, his two sons flew in from the east coast to present the award to him. He is very gratified and surprised to receive the award.

2. Leadership

- Vice President Keith Barnes announced that he provided a presentation on equity and belonging in action at RVC during the recent Rockford Sense of Belonging Taskforce meeting. He also gave a presentation on applying Williams (2013) Dynamic Diversity DNA Stage Model at RVC at the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators’ annual conference in Peoria, IL. While at the conference, he also participated in round table discussions examining the attacks against campus DEI efforts as well as a discussion on the Diversity Officers role.
- Vice President Dr. Patrick Peyer announced that although all fall sports teams qualified for national tournaments, they did not advance past the opening round. However, winter sports have begun and are off to a great start.
- Vice President Heather Snider provided an enrollment update noting that Winterim is at 159% and Spring is 79% to budget. She added that Jennifer Thompson was one of three panelists on a National Council for Marketing and Public Relations webinar on November 16. The webinar entitled “Scaling AI in Two-Year College Marketing” was seen by hundreds of community college marketers across the nation. Also, the RVC website was named one of the 10 best higher education websites by Modern Campus. RVC was one of three community colleges to make the list.
- Vice President Ellen Olson announced that an RFP was issued in October for audit services. Two responses have been received and reviewed, and in December she will bring a recommendation for audit services for the next five years.
- Vice President Dr. Amanda Smith commented that a number of community partners are collaborating to address health concerns explored by the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board. The advisory committee has identified the need to provide greater access to mental health services within the region and more qualified individuals to provide these services. The group is working on creating a pathway for social workers who can earn credentials as they go to provide employment and services.

3. ICCTA Report (Illinois Community College Trustees Association)

Due to the absence of Trustee Nelson, an ICCTA report was not available.

4. Trustee Comments

- Board Chair Cudia commented that she heard very many positive comments about RVC at the ACCT conference in Las Vegas, and she appreciates all of the hard work by staff.
- Trustee Simpson congratulated Trustee Trojan on his recent philanthropy award and hopes everyone enjoys their time off for Thanksgiving.
- Trustee Trojan commented that he appreciates the hard work of the staff who always respond to his requests.
- Trustee Kennedy commented that he has heard about the RVC downtown facility since he joined the Board in February and has been informed by the Administration about the changes since the first estimate, noting that Administration has explained the timeline and past discussions for the project, as well as what programs would be included in the project, how bonding can be used to fund the project, and that nothing has changed but the cost. He appreciates Board members critical thinking on this project, as this is needed to ensure the project is successful. He added that he has worked most of his police life on the west side of Rockford and spent much time with youth who saw no hope and thought that no one cared. They were poverty stricken, had no educational opportunities and were surrounded by the jail and courthouse. The RVC downtown facility will be an infrastructure for change and will provide a place for hope, increased self-worth and sense of belonging. It will also help close the equity gap and increase access to exceptional education and training to those who have none. The programs that were initially designed to be part of this facility should remain in the facility. Although some trustees have said the College should put some of the project in Belvidere or elsewhere and not on the west side of Rockford, he does not agree. Belvidere has a great educational opportunity in the ATC, and the west side of Rockford should have the same. Trustee Kennedy closed by stating his support of the Administration and urged trustees to support educational development for the future of the west side.
- Board Chair Cudia added why she also supports the downtown location. She served on the RPS 205 school board during the People Who Care discrimination lawsuit and saw firsthand the 11-12 issues the Court said needed to be addressed. She became an ordained minister online 20 years ago because different seminaries wouldn't accept her because she was a woman. Since then she has received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in Christian Studies. She moved to Rockford in 1963 from Uvalde, TX, and attended a segregated school, but at the time she and her siblings didn't realize it was wrong -- that's the way it was. She supports building a new facility in downtown Rockford that will provide an extraordinary opportunity for adult learners and youth and encourages trustees to do the same.
- Trustee Trojan commented that he thoroughly supports a downtown campus and has done so since discussions of the Barber Coleman and Rockford Register Star building projects that ultimately did not work out. He acknowledged that it is a complicated situation, but the idea of a downtown facility is going to happen, and wants to be sure everyone understands that.
- Trustee Soltow commented that she also supports the RVC downtown campus, as it will help build rapport with youth and give them a better future, adding that the focus for trustees is to keep moving forward. She is also very grateful for everyone's support and hard work to providing information to trustees. She closed by wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

5. **Student Trustee Report**

Student Trustee Nogueda reported on the annual Scholarship Donor and Recipient luncheon sponsored by the RVC Foundation, the International Showcase held November 17, and the RVC Student Professionals Day hosted by the Student Government Association (SGA). Students were able to attend a resume and entrepreneur workshop as well as receive a professional headshot photo. SGA is supporting growth of Arvee's Army, the student section present at game days, by working with marketing to promote themes to encourage support of the teams.

6. **RVC Foundation Liaison Report**

Trustee Trojan commented that the Foundation Donor and Recipient Luncheon was held November 3 with nearly 300 attendees. He met with the first recipient of the Norma Trojan scholarship who was awarded the scholarship for the second year. He has also been invited to her pinning ceremony in spring 2024. The next Foundation Board meeting will be held in December.

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

The FOIA report was accepted as presented.

Closed Session

At 6:25, p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn to closed session to discuss 1) The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees per Section 2 (c) (1); and/or 2) Collective negotiating matters per Section 2 (c) (2); and/or 3) The purchase or lease of real property for the use of the public body per Section 2 (c) (5); and/or 4) Litigation has been filed, is pending, or probable per Section 2 (c) (11), all in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 7:02 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn the closed session and return 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 Tuesday, December 5, 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 on the main campus.

The next meeting of the Decennial Committee will be held Tuesday, December 19, 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 on the main campus.

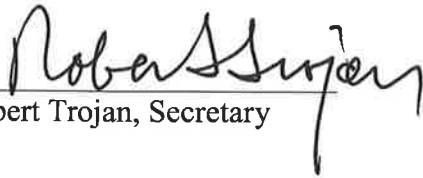
The next Regular meeting will be held Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resource Center on the main campus.

The Board of Trustees retreat will be held Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in Room 1308 of the Woodward Technology Center on the main campus. *Location is for this meeting only.*

Adjournment

At 7:05 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Ann L. Kerwitz.


Robert Trojan, Secretary


Gloria Cardenas Cudia, Board Chair

Vice - chairperson