

**Illinois Community College District No. 511
Rock Valley College
3301 North Mulford Road
Rockford, IL 61114
BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING
January 28, 2025, 5:15 p.m.
Educational Resource Center (ERC), Performing Arts Room (PAR), Room 0214**

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 the Educational Resource Center (ERC), Performing Arts Room (PAR), Room 0214. Board Chair Robert Trojan called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

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

Roll Call

Mr. Robert Trojan	Mr. Richard Kennedy
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Paul Gorski
Ms. Kristen Simpson	Ms. Crystal Soltow
Mr. John Nelson	

The following Trustee was absent: Nico Mikos, Student Trustee

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Interim Vice President of Human Resources/Chief Human Resources Officer; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance/Chief Financial Officer; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Equity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer; Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations/Chief Operations Officer, Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President, Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations; Attorney Joe Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence

There were no Board members attending by means other than physical presence.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

No public comments were received.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 5:16 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn to closed session to discuss that Litigation has been filed, is pending, or probable per Section 2 (c) (11), in accordance with the Illinois Open Act. Trustees Cudia, Simpson, Kennedy, Gorski, and Soltow voted Yes. Trustee Nelson voted No. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 5:27 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn the closed session and return to open session. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Action As A Result Of Closed Session

A motion was made by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to accept the Confidential Settlement Agreement and Release with Vincent Lara #RVC-2025-001. Trustee Nelson raised a question regarding the settlement amount being disclosed. Attorney Perkoski confirmed the amount should not be disclosed. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

General Presentation

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting and the December 17, 2024, Regular Board meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR 8225 – 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 December 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. The total is \$3,181,080.30.

Trustee Gorski asked if there were any changes to the claims sheet. VP Olson confirmed there were no changes.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Soltow to approve BR8225. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2. BR 8226 – A – Purchase Report – A – FY2025 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked items for purchase on Board Report 8226-A, Purchase Report – A – FY2025 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8226-A. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR 8227 – Communication Services Audit

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves SpyGlass, LLC to conduct a telecom expense audit for the College and authorizes the College to execute a contractual agreement.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8227.

Trustee Gorski inquired when the audit will be completed. VP Olson estimates that it is expected to be completed within 90 days. More information will be provided once an agreement is signed which has not been done yet. Trustee Gorski hopes information will be provided in advance before the next fiscal year budget is presented.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

4. BR 8228 – 2026 – 2027 Academic Calendar

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the 2026-2027 Academic Calendar.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve BR8228. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

5. BR 8229 – 2026 – 2027 Operations Calendar

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the FY2026-FY2027 Operations Calendar.

A motion was made Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8229. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

6. Br 8230 – Personnel Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the personnel items listed on Board Report 8230.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8230. There was no discussion. Trustees Cudia, Simpson, Kennedy, Gorski, Soltow, and Trojan voted yes. Trustee Nelson voted no. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote.

7. BR 8231 – Closed Session Minutes through December 2024

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the following:

1. That the minutes of the closed session meetings of July 9, 2024 through December 17, 2024 shall be approved.
2. That the need for confidentiality still exists for the closed meeting minutes for the period of July 9, 2024 through December 17, 2024.
3. That the verbatim recordings shall be maintained pursuant to an existing litigation hold on College records.
4. That minutes identified in this document shall continue to be confidential until further action of the Board of Trustees.
5. That the Board's legal counsel shall, after consulting with the Board's chair, have the ability to review any closed session meeting minutes that the Board previously approved to remain confidential, to respond to any Freedom of Information Act request, litigation discovery requests, or as otherwise required by court order, and to produce any said closed session meeting minutes or parts thereof where the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8231.

Trustee Gorski wanted confirmation on the time period for the closed session minutes. Attorney Perkoski confirmed the closed session minutes are from July 2024 to December 2024.

Trustees Cudia, Simpson, Kennedy, Nelson, Soltow, and Trojan voted yes. Trustee Gorski voted no. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote.

Other Business

1. New Business

Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, provided an urgent update on the fire alarm panel and the Support Services Building (SSB) roof.

- a) The fire alarm panel needs specific parts to effectively alert the fire department through the monitoring station. The College has budgeted for a complete replacement of this 25-year-old system; these funds can be utilized to repair the panels, and the electronic boards being installed will be fully compatible with the new system once it is updated.

- b) For the SSB roof, three areas of the membrane have torn, with an estimated 30 percent of the roof damaged. To prevent further issues, large containers filled with water have been placed to stabilize the membrane. However, persistent winds have complicated assessments of additional leakages.

The Department of Plant Operations and Maintenance (POM) is actively collecting quote estimates to address the immediate roof repairs and/or to replace the entire roof. If possible, the College will defer the work and develop a bid accordingly. Immediate attention is essential for the facility's safety. The initial estimated cost to repair the three areas on the roof is \$120,000 and the estimated cost for the entire roof is between \$450,000 and \$500,000. This project will have to go for bid since the College doesn't have a unit bidder.

Trustee Nelson asked for details on the insurance coverage for the SSB roof and its repair history. Discussion ensued.

Trustee Gorski asked how the College discovered the issues for the SSB roof and fire alarm system. Discussion ensued.

President Spearman provided the following updates:

- a) The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Downtown West Campus will be held on March 27, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. More information will be provided as the date approaches.
- b) The new Trump administration has implemented a review of all approved federal grants as a result of recent executive orders. Consequently, heads of executive departments and agencies must immediately pause all expenditures on federal grants, loans, and financial assistance programs. Before this meeting, it was announced that the US District Court has temporarily blocked the freeze on federal grants and loans. The RVC Administration will review the executive orders and collaborate with Robbins Schwartz attorneys to take decisive action, remaining committed to all relevant laws.

Trustee Gorski raised concerns about how the federal funding freeze may impact faculty, staff, and students. He requested regular updates and a report from the RVC administration to keep the Board of Trustees informed.

2. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

President Spearman memorialized the passing of former State Representative Chuck Jefferson, who secured state funding for a mentoring program to uplift Black and Brown students at RVC, as well as the passing of former RVC President Dr. Roland "Chip" Chapdelaine, who led the college from 1997 to 2004, overseeing the transformation of the Bengt Sjoström Theatre, the Student Center, and the construction of the Support Services Building. He expressed heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering dedication to service. Last week, the College announced the partnership between Northern Illinois University (NIU) and RVC for the Rockford Promise initiative. Rockford Promise Scholars who graduate from RVC with an associate degree, a GPA of 2.5 or higher, and maintain good standing can transfer to NIU tuition-free.

2. Leadership Team Updates

Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, expressed heartfelt appreciation for the First Year Experience Office, led by Amanda Zika and Kari McDonald, for organizing the New Student Welcome event on January 9, 2025. He thanked the Peer Mentor staff for their dedication in assisting new students with their academic journeys, as well as the Student Life and Intercultural Student Services team—Takesha, Tasha, Vanessa, and Eunice—for their efforts in creating an inviting Welcome Week.

Dr. Terrica Huntley, interim vice president of human resources, congratulated Betsy Saucedo, human resources generalist, on receiving her master's degree in Human Resources Management from Saint Mary's University. The College appreciates her contributions to the President's Office and the Human Resources team. Dr. Huntley also congratulated Justin Severson, professional development specialist, for his hard work and dedication for completing the Society for Human Resources Management Certified Professional (SHRC CP) Exam.

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, provided several updates. (1) As of January 28, the spring budget goal has been exceeded by 18% and the stretch goal has been exceeded by 12%. (2) RVC's accreditation has been reaffirmed for ten years by HLC, with no interim monitoring. The College is pursuing the open pathway, allowing assurance on a continuous improvement project in years five through nine. (3) Jen Thompson, executive director of college communications, serves on the Illinois Community College Marketing Collaborative Executive Committee (ICCMC). The ICCMC committee has partnered with Central States Marketing for a spring campaign to promote community colleges and is working with the Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) legislative committee to develop key talking points and marketing efforts for legislative priorities. (4) Recently, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)—Nate Jordan and Nancy McDonald—met with the Village of Roscoe with plans to develop a small business incubator, a project in

partnership with Hononegah Community High School and the Village of Roscoe. The Village wanted to learn more about the resources and services that RVC offer to assist small business owners who will be utilizing the space.

Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career technical education and workforce development, announced that RVC received four grants from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB): the Rev Up to Electric Vehicles Grant (\$446,250), the Non-Credit Workforce Development Grant (\$100,000), the Innovative Bridges and Transitions Grant (\$340,000), and the Trades Schools Grant (\$300,000). The total dollar amount of grants received is \$1,186,250.

Mr. Rick Jenks, vice president of operations, announced that the Starlight Theatre won seven 2024 BroadwayWorld Chicago Awards: Best Dance Production for “Newsies”; Best Lighting Design of A Play or Musical to Bryan Rivera for “Legally Blonde”; Best Music Direction & Orchestra Performance to Christopher Joyner for “The Color Purple”; Best Scenic Design Of A Play or Musical to Carmen Turner for “The Color Purple”; Best Supporting Performer In A Musical to Darby Whitmore for “The Color Purple”; Best Theatre For Young Audiences Production for “Beauty and the Beast”; and Favorite Local Theatre to RVC Starlight Theatre. He also acknowledged Chris Brady and his production team as their dedication and excellence is being applauded, and the entire Starlight crew for representing the College and community.

Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, highlighted the Winter Faculty Development Day (PD), held on January 10, 2025. (1) The Winter PD theme was “Pathways to Success” and breakout sessions focused on student engagement across modalities, accommodations, and accessibility. (2) The attendance included: 110 Faculty and Staff. (3) The keynote speaker was Meagan Pollock of Engineering Inclusion. (4) There was a faculty panel focused on Learning Experiences and Plans for the Future. Dr. Smith also shared that on January 21, 2025, Dr. Erin Fisher, psychology professor, hosted an interview for the community on Channel 17 WTVO titled, “Online Tools Help More Adults Recognize Undiagnosed ADHD,” and concluded her report by commending RVC faculty for their continuous professional development.

Dr. Keith Barnes, vice president of equity and inclusion, and Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, had no updates to report.

3. ICCTA (Illinois Community College Trustees Association) Report

Trustee Nelson announced that the upcoming 2025 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Legislative Summit will have an ICCTA meeting and state reception in Washington, D.C.

Trustee Trojan indicated that Trustees Simpson and Nelson will be attending the 2025 ACCT National Legislative Summit. He would like them to write a report of

their developed insights as they ought to share the knowledge absorbed with the rest of the board members so all can learn. This will also help the Board determine the selection of trustees attending conferences.

4. Trustee Comments

Trustee Gorski congratulated everyone for a successful HLC outcome. He encouraged everyone to continue to be future-focused and asked leadership to keep the board well-informed of possible financial threats or concerns that might impact the college budget.

Trustee Cudia expressed her contentment to be back at the board table, stating all Leadership reports are a positive way to start the year. She continues to be grateful and proud to be a part of RVC.

Trustee Kennedy commended Vice President Jenks for proactively managing operational crises and reporting them to the board in a timely manner.

Trustee Simpson addressed the conference attendance for board members, suggesting that if members are interested in attending that it should be discussed and decided by the full board.

Trustee Soltow was pleased to return to the board table considering that she wasn't able to attend the January 25 Board Retreat.

Trustee Nelson welcomed the return of Trustees Soltow and Cudia. He reverted the conversation back to conference attendance for board members, stating that all board members should have the privilege to attend conferences and are welcomed to attend any of the ICCTA meetings.

Trustee Trojan concluded remarks to remind trustees that May 7 is ICCTA Lobby Day and Robbins Schwartz will host board training on June 14, 2025. He also introduced the idea of holding a summer board retreat to focus on legislative issues.

5. Student Trustee Report

There was no student report.

6. RVC Foundation Liaison Report

Trustee Trojan reported that the Foundation scholarship application period will open on February 14, 2025, and close on April 1, 2025.

7. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report

The FOIA report was accepted as presented.

In the report, Trustee Gorski requested correspondence information on Bid #24-26-D04 Structure for Downtown Campus. The information was delayed due to the holiday, but he wanted to do research on a pattern of the bidding process. Trustee Trojan asked that Trustee Gorski provide a report of the information requested and share feedback of his findings.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 6:23 p.m., a motion was made Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn to closed session to discuss the following: 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) 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 6:45 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, 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 on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

Adjournment

At 6:47 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Araceli Olvera


Richard Kennedy, Secretary


Robert Trojan, Board Chair