

**Illinois Community College District No. 511
Rock Valley College
3301 North Mulford Road
Rockford, IL 61114
Educational Resource Center (ERC), Room 0214, Performing Arts Room (PAR)**

**ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING
December 17, 2024, 5:15 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 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.

Board Chair Trojan announced that there will be two closed sessions for the December 17 Regular Board meeting. The first closed session will be after the Truth-In-Taxation Hearing, and the second closed session will be at the end of the meeting.

Roll Call

Mr. Robert Trojan	Mr. Richard Kennedy
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Paul Gorski
Ms. Kristen Simpson	Ms. Crystal Soltow joined at 5:16 p.m.
Mr. John Nelson	Mr. Nico Mikos, Student Trustee joined at 5:16 p.m.

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

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; 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; Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations; Attorney Matthew Gardner, 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.

Board Chair Trojan 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 Robert Trojan at 5:17 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2024.

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

Mr. Robert Trojan

Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia

Ms. Kristen Simpson

Mr. John Nelson

Mr. Richard Kennedy

Mr. Paul Gorski

Ms. Crystal Soltow

Mr. 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; 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; Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations; Attorney Matthew Gardner, 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 2025, Rock Valley College is tied for the eighth lowest tuition rate in the State of Illinois at \$125.00 per credit hour, whereby statute the tuition could be as high as \$204 per credit hour based on the Certification of Per-Capital Cost for Fiscal Year 2024.

Olson confirmed that the tax levy has not changed since reviewed at the October 22, 2024 Regular Board meeting, and the Notice required by state statute was published on Wednesday, December 4, 2024 and Thursday, December 5, 2024 with Rock Valley Publishing. The Notice was also available on Public Notice Illinois website. In addition, it has been posted on the doors of Building E and the Support Services Building on the main campus and posted on the College's website for 30 days.

Olson also confirmed the following: 1) The levy request is based on an assumed 10.22% 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 \$19,949,394 for Education and \$3,469,460 for Operations and Maintenance; 3) The tax levy request under Tort is \$1,510,000 for Insurance and Tort/Risk Management, \$490,000 for Social Security; 4) The tax levy request is \$60,000 for the Audit Fund, and \$1,500,000 for Protection, Health and Safety; 5) The total proposed and special purpose property taxes levied for 2024 is \$26,978,854, an increase of \$2,920,239; 6) The Bond and Interest levy request of \$12,140,300 is for the bond and interest payment schedule that has been previously submitted to the District's six counties; This does not include the 2024 Working Cash Bonds that closed November 18, 2024; this is expected to have an increase of .03; 8) The overall tax rate is projected to decrease by .0081 from .4592 to .4510. The total levy amount is \$39,119,154, an increase of \$3,078,678 from levy 2023 or an increase of 8.54%.

Board Chair Trojan 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 December 17, 2024. Mrs. Olson confirmed that the College did not receive any comments from the public.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to close the Truth-in-Taxation Hearing at 5:22 p.m. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Regular Meeting

Board Chair Robert Trojan announced that the Truth-In-Taxation Hearing was closed and the regular meeting would be reconvened.

Closed Session

At 5:22 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn to closed session to discuss Litigation has been filed, is pending, or probable per Section 2 (c) (11), in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Reconvene Open Session

At 6:01 p.m., a motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, 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.

General Presentation

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting and the November 19, 2024, Regular Board meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

1. BR 8216 – Claims Sheet – November 2024

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 November 1, 2024, to November 31, 2024. The total is \$2,559,164.18.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8216. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

2. BR 8217-A – Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked items for purchase on Board Report 8217 – A, Purchase Report – A – FY2025 Amendments.

A. Carahsoft Technology Corp	Reston, VA	\$46,000.00	Not to Exceed
B. Ellucian	Malvern, PA	\$270,000.00	Not to Exceed
C. Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Rockford, IL	\$15,000.00	Not to Exceed
D. Honorlock, Inc	Boca Raton, FL	\$9,000.00	Not to Exceed
E. Hyland LLC	Lenexa, KS	\$7,000.00	Not to Exceed

Trustee Gorski asked if changes had been made to Board Report 8217-A, Purchase Report A, since the December 3 Committee of the Whole meeting. VP Olson confirmed there were no changes.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve Board Report 8217-A. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR 8217-B – Purchase Report B – FY2025 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the marked item for purchase on Board Report 8212-B, Purchase Report – B – FY25 Purchases.

A. Miller Engineering Co.	Rockford, IL	\$4,185,280.00
B. Helm Electric	Sterling, IL	\$390,703.50
C. Northern Illinois Service Company	Rockford, IL	\$3,998,632.00
D. Ruiz Construction Systems	Rockford, IL	\$7,602,100.00

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to separate Item D, Ruiz Construction Systems, Structural Construction Capital for the Downtown West Site Improvement from Purchase Report B – FY25 Purchases, Board Report 8217-B. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

A motion was made by Trustee Gorski, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Purchase Report B – FY2025 Purchases, Board Report 8217-B, as amended, removing Item D. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

D. Ruiz Construction Systems	Rockford, IL	\$7,602,100.00
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A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve Item D, Ruiz Construction Systems, for the Structural Construction for the Downtown West Site Improvements.

Trustee Nelson commented that the College should strive to receive more than one bid; nonetheless he supports the motion. It is his understanding that Ruiz Construction Systems does outstanding work.

Trustee Gorski commented that he would support Ruiz Construction Systems, but based on information, there is a conflict of interest, and so he will abstain from voting on this item.

Trustees Trojan, Cudia, Nelson, Soltow, Simpson, and Kennedy voted yes. Student Trustee Mikos voted yes (student advisory). Trustee Gorski abstained. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote.

4. BR 8218 – Resolution Abating a Portion of the Working Cash Fund

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the resolution to abate a portion of the Working Cash Fund and reimburse the Education Fund for \$12,415,582 for a portion of the capital expenditures associated with the altering, remodeling, and equipping Classroom II (CLII) and the Health Sciences Center (HSC).

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve Board Report 8218. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chair Trojan mentioned to the audience that all the documents were thoroughly discussed at the December 3, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting.

5. BR 8219 – Transfer of Student Purpose Account to an Endowment Fund with Rock Valley College Foundation

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees authorizes Rock Valley College to transfer the outstanding balance of the Brewster Account, \$81,473, held at Illinois Bank & Trust to the Rock Valley College Foundation for the purpose of establishing an Endowment Fund for Student Emergency Funding.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to approve Board Report 8219. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

6. BR 8220 - BR 8220 – Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 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 FY2025 Estimated Revenues by Source for Rock Valley College and requests that Ellen K. Olson, the Treasurer for Rock Valley College, signs the attached report.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve Board Report 8220. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

7. BR8221 – Levy Year 2024 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 2024 as follows:

Educational Purposes – Fund 01	\$19,949,394.00
Operations and Maintenance Purposes – 02 (\$.0400)	\$3,469,460.00
Protection, Health, Life, or Safety – Fund 03 (\$.0173)	\$1,500,000.00
Financial Audit Purposes – Fund 11	\$60,000.00
Liability Protection Settlement fund – Fund 12	
Liability Insurance/Tort & Risk Management	\$1,510,000.00
Social Security and Mechanical Insurance	\$490,000.00
Total Tax Levy	\$26,978,854.00

A motion was made by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to approve Board Report 8221. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

8. BR8222 – Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Project Requests

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the use of Fund 03 Capital and Protection, Health, and Safety Funds for the projects described on the Board Report.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve Board Report 8222. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

9. BR8223 – Fiscal Year 2025 Fund Transfer Request

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the College administration to allocate \$15,000,000 from operating funds for the strategic initiatives.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve Board Report 8223. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

10. BR8224 – Personnel Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the personnel items listed on Board Report 8224.

A motion was made by Student Trustee Mikos, seconded by Trustee Kennedy, to approve Board Report 8224. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Other Business

1. New Business

There was no new business.

2. Unfinished Business

At the December 3 Committee of the Whole (CotW) meeting, Trustee Nelson requested making changes/corrections to the November 5 CotW minutes. Chair Trojan asked Trustee Nelson if he submitted changes/corrections to the President's Office. Trustee Nelson withdrew his request of making changes or corrections to the November 5 CotW minutes.

Note: The finalized Cash and Investment Report for November 30, 2024 was attached in the packet.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

President Spearman reflected on Rock Valley College's (RVC) accomplishments in 2024:

- Launched our Downtown West project
- Received funds toward the renovation of CLII
- Received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- Earned multiple DEI recognitions, such as becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution and receiving the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from the Insight into Diversity Magazine
- Received the Strengthening Community Colleges Department of Labor grant focused on non-credit and credit articulation agreements
- Launched a collision repair program
- Implemented our CRM with non-credit and credit students

- In the midst of celebrating RVC's birthday with our 60th year celebration
- Had a successful HLC visit with no monitoring
- Launched student-led RVC Votes Initiative; RVC won a \$5,000 grant and a \$2,500 grant from Ask Every Student to support this project. He appreciated the students, faculty, and staff. Over 300 students registered to vote through RVC's custom portal. Almost 2,000 students and community members voted at our on-campus early voting location. And, RVC has been recognized by ALL IN: Campus Democracy Challenge as one of the 2024 ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses.
- Recognized RVC students and faculty for their efforts in the National Cyber League Fall 2024 Competition Season. RVC placed #12 nationally in the Cyber Power Rankings among 9,260 students from 550 colleges representing all 50 states in the National Cyber League Fall 2024 Season. And, concluded with wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year to all!

2. Leadership Team Updates

- Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, gave an enrollment update. She congratulated George Winiarski, manager of creative services, on his upcoming retirement effective December 31, 2024, recognizing his service with the College. Lastly, she announced important dates for the Annual State of the College and Board Retreat.
- Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, congratulated faculty who recently retired: Aviation Professor, Mark Adolphson; Chemistry Professor, Dr. Frank Calvagna; English Professor, Kerri Shaw; Economic Professors, Chuck Sicotte and Dr. Mike Youngblood. In addition, she announced that RVC has added two more faculty to our current 26 faculty on the tenure track. On January, 10, 2025, the college will host the annual Winter Faculty Development Day. Lastly, RVC Adult Education offers ICAPS (Integrated Career Academic Preparation System). This past fall, seven students successfully completed the ICAPS CNA program.
- Dr. Terrica Huntley, interim vice president of human resources, gave special acknowledgement to the HR benefits team for their efforts in assisting employees to register for health benefits. She also gave thanks to Justin Severson, professional development specialist, for coordinating the Supervisor 201 training.
- Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, congratulated the athletics department, coaches, staff, and students for their highest-ever departmental term G.P.A. at 3.05. Dr. Peyer gave thanks to Betty Villalobos-Hallman, academic advisor, for her support in helping students stay on track. He shared that Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opened on December 1, 2024. Lastly, on January 9, 2024, the First Year Experience office will host a New Student Welcome event for Spring semester in the Student Atrium.
- Dr. Keith Barnes, vice president of equity and inclusion, shared the goal of the American Association of Colleges and Universities Truth and Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Centers, as well as announced that RVC was selected to host a TRHT Campus Center. Dr. Barnes gave special recognition to Tek Curry, DEI specialist, and the Race and Ethnicity Commission and Promoting an Inclusive Community (PAIC) for their efforts in RVC becoming a TRHT campus center. Lastly, he commemorated Kwanza, an annual celebration of African-American culture from December 26 to January 1, and gave special thanks to Dr. Luevinus Muhammad, interim dean of students, the Student life staff, the DEI staff, and the Black History and Culture Committee for their efforts in the Kwanza Celebration event held on December 17, 2024.

- Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, gave an update regarding the Employee Retention Credit (ERC) program, stating that the deadline for new claims was January 31, 2024. Under the Board's advisement, the College filed a 941-X form for calendar years Q1-2021 and Q2-2021 in January 2024. The IRS is processing quarter to quarter and still has a significant backlog.

3. **ICCTA Report (Illinois Community College Trustees Association)**

There was no ICCTA report.

4. **Trustee Comments**

- Trustee Gorski had no comments.
- Trustee Cudia mentioned articles that she had read regarding the hardships faced by other colleges and universities. She acknowledged the hard work of college personnel, praised the College's accomplishments, and stated she is proud to be a part of the team. She wished everyone happy holidays.
- Trustee Soltow shared her perspective on board improvements such as better communication, the board being heard, and the board's solidarity. With the end of the year approaching, she expressed gratitude and appreciation for serving as a board member and looked forward to continue representing RVC in 2025. She hoped that everyone enjoyed the holidays.
- Trustee Nelson extended a happy holiday to students, employees, the community, and taxpayers. He mentioned the recent events in Madison have cast a shadow on the winter celebrations and expressed a desire to learn more about RVC's preparedness in the event of an active shooter on campus.
- Trustee Simpson echoed Soltow and Nelson's comments, wishing everyone happy holidays. She looked forward to returning in 2025.
- Trustee Kennedy expressed his appreciation to Dr. Spearman and the college administration for their continued preparedness and articulate and thoughtful responses to the board. As a board member, he understands that their roles can bring stress to college leadership and personnel. He greatly appreciated everything employees do for the college and for the community.
- Trustee Trojan addressed the impending state budget shortfall, which is predicted to be approximately \$3 billion and could increase in the years ahead. Also, with the new federal administration, there will be further fiscal uncertainties at the federal level. He encouraged everyone to observe financially for the college. On a lighter note, he wished everyone happy holidays and thanked college employees for creating a well-rounded college with a growing national reputation.

5. **Student Trustee Report**

Student Trustee Nico Mikos' report included welcoming the new Student Activities Coordinator, Eunice Obeng-Adjekum, who started on December 9, 2024. He announced that the RVC Involvement and Community Fair will be held on January 21, 2025. All RVC clubs are preparing for Spring 2025 Welcome Week, which will be held January 21 – 24, 2025.

6. **RVC Foundation Liaison Report**

Trustee Trojan's reported that the Foundation is entering a \$2.5 million campaign for the Downtown West Campus. There will be naming rights for rooms and other parts of the campus with funds raised benefitting student scholarships. Lorraine Logan has been reinstated as a Foundation Board member.

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

The FOIA Report was accepted as presented.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 6:46 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Kennedy, seconded by Trustee Nelson, 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 7:20 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, 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, January 14, 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.

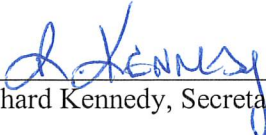
The next Regular Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 5:15 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Performing Arts room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The Board of Trustees Retreat will be held on Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in the Woodward Technology Center (WTC) in Room 1308, on the main campus.

Adjournment

At 7:22 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Mikos, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Araceli Olvera


Richard Kennedy, Secretary


Robert Trojan, Board Chair