

**Rock Valley College  
Community College District No. 511  
3301 N. Mulford Road, Rockford, IL 61114  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
5:15 p.m. Tuesday, April 8, 2025  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

The Rock Valley College (RVC) Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting was convened on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC). The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by Chairperson Robert Trojan.

**Roll Call**

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

Mr. Robert Trojan	Ms. Crystal Soltow
Mr. Richard Kennedy	Mr. John Nelson joined the meeting at 5:27 p.m.
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia	Mr. Nico Mikos, Student Trustee
Ms. Kristen Simpson	

The following Trustee was absent at roll call: Mr. Paul Gorski.

Also present: Dr. Howard J. Spearman, President; Dr. Keith Barnes, Vice President of Cultural Excellence; Dr. Patrick Peyer, Vice President of Student Affairs; Dr. Terrica Huntley, Interim Vice President of Human Resources; Ms. Heather Snider, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Communications; Dr. Hansen Stewart, Vice President of Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development; Mr. Rick Jenks, Vice President of Operations; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs; Ms. Ellen Olson, Vice President of Finance; Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President; Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant; Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Operations, Attorney Joseph Perkoski, Robbins Schwartz.

**Communications and Petitions**

There were no public comments, communications, or petitions to be recognized.

**Recognition of Visitors**

There were no visitors to be recognized.

**Review of Minutes**

There were no comments on the minutes from the March 11, 2025, Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting.

**General Presentations**

**1. City of Rockford Property Tax Rebate Program and Rockford Promise**

Dr. Spearman introduced Mayor Tom McNamara, who presented information on the City of Rockford Property Tax Rebate Program. Mayor McNamara stated that the City of Rockford, in partnership with the Northwest Illinois Alliance of Realtors, the Rockford Apartment Association, the Homebuilders Association of Rockford, as well as the residents of Rockford, has created a housing strategy framework to help the city meet the growing demand for affordable housing, with the goal of creating between 6,000 and 9,000 new residential units in the City of Rockford by 2035. The Property Tax Rebate Program will provide a three-year property tax rebate, issued at the end of the tax year in a single lump sum. Mayor McNamara also talked about the advantages, specifics of the program, and the number of participants from previous years. Discussion ensued.

Mayor McNamara also mentioned Rockford Promise: a non-profit 501(C)(3) location-based scholarship program that offers scholarships to cover the gap between financial aid and the cost of tuition to deserving graduates of the Rockford Public School District 205. Rockford Promise's goal is to increase educational attainment in the community while providing a powerful economic incentive for residents and businesses to locate in the Rockford region. Mayor McNamara stated that the City of Rockford has partnerships with Rockford Promise, Northern Illinois University, and Rockford University. Mayor McNamara would like Rock Valley College to join the partnership. Discussion ensued.

At 5:39 p.m., Student Trustee Niko Mikos left the meeting.

### **Teaching, Learning & Communications Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Simpson**

#### **1. FY2025 Enrollment Update**

Ms. Heather Snider, vice president of institutional effectiveness and communications, presented the FY2025 Enrollment Update. Ms. Snider stated that there were no changes to the FY2025 update.

#### **FY2026 Enrollment Update**

Ms. Snider explained that the goals have changed compared to FY2025. The budget goal went from 110,000 credit hours to 115,000 credit hours, and the stretch goal went from 115,000 credit hours to 120,000 credit hours. Ms. Snider stated that Summer II and Fall are 42% to the goal and 40.3% to the stretch goal. Ms. Snider said RVC enrollment is up from last year. Discussion ensued.

#### **2. 2025 Completion Ceremonies**

Dr. Amanda Smith, vice president of academic affairs, presented the 2025 Completion Ceremonies. Dr. Smith discussed the date, time, and location of the ceremonies for 2025.

#### **3. Strategic Plan Update: Interact Survey-Secret Customer Service Shopper Report**

Dr. Patrick Peyer, vice president of student affairs, presented the Strategic Plan Update: Interact Secret Survey-Customer Service Shopper Report. Dr. Peyer stated that the secret shopper research aimed to review RVC's phone and online intake processes for enrollment and student services. Examining and understanding how RVC presents itself is a critical step in developing an effective and efficient intake strategy that may lead to increased recruitment success. Offices that were included in the research are: Admissions, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, Student Records, and Testing. Secret shopper callers from Interact Communications posed as prospective students to acquire information through phone inquiries to RVC. Callers also conducted online inquiries to RVC through email and its online chat application. Responses to these inquiries were rated using a standardized protocol, and additionally, the researchers documented their experience with written comments. The online inquiries occurred from February 1 to February 15, 2025.

Dr. Peyer explained the outcomes and recommendations. Some action items were to schedule regular and ongoing Customer Service training for frontline staff, provide additional training on encouraging callers to "take the next step," and develop additional email templates to ensure consistent RVC branding. Discussion ensued.

#### **4. Extended Career Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) - Rockford Public School District #205**

Dr. Hansen Stewart, vice president of career and technical education and workforce development, stated that on January 24, 2023, the RVC Board of Trustees approved Board Report #8008, the Career Running Start IGA, with Rockford Public School District #205. The original agreement should have been for two years, but it was only executed for a one-year agreement. Both parties agreed to extend the Career Running Start IGA through June 30, 2025. The extension will apply for the Spring 2025 semester.

**Early College Items** As an introduction to the Early College items on the agenda, Dr. Hansen Stewart provided an overview of the Career Pathways Jump Start, Dual and Articulated Credit, Running Start, and Senior Semester programs and agreements with the area high school districts. Discussion ensued.

The Career Pathways Jump Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) program allows high school students to take dual credit courses that meet the requirements for a high school diploma and an RVC certificate in Fundamentals of

Mechatronics, Certified Manufacturing Associate, Industrial Welder, Automotive Maintenance and Light Repair, Basic Electronics or 30 credits toward the Aviation Maintenance program certificate.

To provide consistency across school districts and align with the Dual Credit Quality Act, RVC developed the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that offers dual credit for high school courses. These dual credit courses are taught by qualified high school instructors and are designed to allow eligible students to receive college credit in high school.

Running Start is a formal program that allows qualified students to attend RVC for their junior and senior high school years. Students may enroll in a two-year degree completion program in which students take courses that meet the requirements for both a high school diploma and an RVC associate degree simultaneously, or a one-year program that meets the requirements for both a high school diploma and one year of RVC credit courses simultaneously. The Running Start program will be administered through the Early College office at RVC in conjunction with the high schools enrolled in the program.

The Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) allows qualified district students to attend RVC for their final senior year high school semester. Students take dual credit courses that meet the requirements for both a high school diploma and one semester of RVC credit courses simultaneously.

**5. Career Pathways Jump Start Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)**

- a. Byron Community Unit School District #226
- b. North Boone Community Unit School District #200
- c. Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321

**6. Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)**

- a. Boylan Catholic High School
- b. Byron Community Unit School District #226
- c. Harlem School District #122
- d. Meridian Community Unit School District #223
- e. North Boone Community Unit School District #200
- f. Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321
- g. Rockford Christian School

**7. Running Start Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)**

- a. Byron Community Unit School District #226
- b. Harlem Unit School District #122
- c. North Boone Community Unit School District #200
- d. Pecatonica Community Unit School District #321

**8. Senior Semester Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)**

- a. Byron Community Unit School District #226
- b. North Boone Community Unit School District #200

For the April 22, 2025, Regular Meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to save paper by printing only the new Career Pathways Jumpstart Intergovernmental Agreements attachments for the paper packets.

**Finance Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Gorski**

**1. Purchase Reports**

Ms. Ellen Olson, vice president of finance, presented the purchase reports.

***Purchase Report A – FY2025 Purchases***

**A. Grounds Equipment – (Capital Service Equipment – Equipment Replacement)**

1.	Deere and Company	Cary, NC	\$ 100,712.62*(1)
	Tractor House	Lincoln, NE	\$ 108,598.00
	Western Mass Power Equipment	Pittsfield, MA	\$ 117,791.00

**B. Contractual Services – (Vendor Training Alliances – Continuing Education Center)**

2.	Wolter, Inc.	Brookfield, WI	\$ 39,000.00*(2)
			Not to Exceed

**C. Paper – (Office Supplies Purchases – General Institution)**

3.	Midland Paper	Rockford, IL	\$ 60,000.00*(3)
			Not to Exceed
	Veritiv Corporation	Aurora, IL	\$ 64,355.27
	Garvey's Office Products	Niles, IL	\$ 29,115.73
	Office Pro, Inc.	Beloit, WI	\$ 27,234.04

**D. Server Upgrades – (Office Computer Equipment – Information Technology)**

4.	CDW Government, Inc.	Vernon Hills, IL	\$ 94,790.24*(4)
			Not to Exceed

**E. Water Main Repairs – (Maintenance Services Site/Grounds – Boiler House)**

5.	Helm Service	Freeport, IL	\$ 34,104.68*(5)
			Not to Exceed

**2. Cash and Investment Report**

Ms. Olson presented the Cash and Investment Report through March 31, 2025. Total operating cash is \$31,196,812. Total operating cash and investments are \$95,499,192. Total capital funds are \$23,655,986. Since March 31, 2025, the change in capital funds has been \$91,950. The operating cash and investments change since February 28, 2025, is \$1,904,184. Ms. Olson stated that the total operating cash and investment funds were 93.89% of the FY2025 operating budget.

**3. Resolution Calling for Bond Issue Notification Act Public Hearing, Bonds Not to Exceed \$56,250,000**

Ms. Olson stated that RVC is constructing and equipping the Downtown West facilities. RVC has issued General Obligation Debt Certificates (Limited Tax), Series 2025A, Dated April 21, 2025. To fund this capital project, RVC will issue bonds not to exceed \$56,250,000 to fund and pay this claim against the College. The intent of the resolution is in anticipation of the obligation to call for a Bond Issue Notification Act (BINA) Public Hearing to be held on May 27, 2025, before the scheduled Board Meeting. At the hearing, the Board will present the reasons for the proposed bond issue and permit the public to present oral or written testimony on the proposal to sell bonds not exceeding \$56,250,000 to pay claims against the District.

**4. Resolution Calling the Parameters Issuance of Funding Bonds Not to Exceed \$56,250,000**

Ms. Olson explained that the intent of the resolution is to set forth the bond parameters, which include the date, denomination, rate of interest, and maturing of the bonds, fix all details to the issue and execution thereof, and provide for the levy of a tax sufficient to pay both interest and principal of the bonds as they mature.

**5. FY2026 Tentative Budget and Public Notice**

Ms. Olson discussed the FY2026 Tentative Budget and Public Notice. She explained the revenue assumptions and expenditure assumptions for the Operating Funds (Fund 01 and Fund 02), the Audit (Fund 11), Tort (Fund 12), and the Employee Benefits (Fund 18). Ms. Olson explained the next steps to approve the Tentative FY2026 Budget, and that it will be available for public inspection on May 23, 2025, for 30 days in the Financial Services office and on the RVC website. Ms. Olson stated that the Public Hearing and the Adoption of the Final FY2026 Budget will be held at the June 4, 2025, Regular Board meeting. Ms. Olson stated that the FY2026 proposed budget is a balanced budget for operations with a \$3,797,260 contingency.

## **Operations Discussion: Board Liaison Trustee Kennedy**

### **1. Personnel Report**

Mr. Rick Jenks presented the April 2025 Personnel Report, which contained two appointments and two placeholders. There were two departures: Tricia Wagner resigned effective April 11, 2025, and Carol Anderson is retiring effective May 31, 2025.

### **2. Personnel Report: Sabbatical Leave**

Dr. Smith presented the Personnel Report: Sabbatical Leave. Dr. Smith is recommending that Moria Nagy, assistant professor of life sciences, be awarded a one-semester sabbatical to address the lived experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual, and all other identities not encompassed in the short acronym (LGBTQIA+). Dr. Smith stated that students will be interviewed, and focus groups will be conducted. Assistant Professor Nagy's doctoral research is titled "A Qualitative Research Study Focusing on the Lived Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Community College Students Regarding Science Identity and Sense of Belonging."

### **3. Resolution Honoring the Retirement of Rock Valley College Employees**

Mr. Jenks presented the Resolution Honoring the Retirement of Rock Valley College employees. Mr. Jenks stated that the following employees retired during 2024-2025: Mark Adolphson, Carol Anderson, Mitchell Dally, Lynn Fisher-Carlson, Amy Heilman, Michael Kelley, Vicki Lay, Kim Patterson, Steven Perry, Kerri Shaw, Charles Sicotte, Larry Stark, George Winiarski, and Michael Youngblood. The retirees were thanked for their commitment, countless hours, and the unique skills and talents dedicated to the betterment of Rock Valley College.

### **4. 2025 Summer Flex Days for Full-Time ESP, SSA, PSA, and Administrative Staff**

Mr. Jenks presented the 2025 Summer Flex Days for Full-Time Educational Support Personnel (ESP), Support Staff Association (SSA), Professional Staff Association (PSA), and Administrative staff. Summer Flex Days are five flex days to be used by the ESP, SSA, PSA, and Administrative staff between May 19, 2025, and August 1, 2025. The flex days must be used in eight-hour blocks and scheduled through the appropriate supervisor. If a shift is longer than the eight-hour flex day, the time can be supplemented with other paid time (vacation or personal hours). If the flex days are not used during the time frame, the days will be forfeited. Discussion ensued.

### **5. Change Order Update**

Mr. Jenks presented the Change Orders for Downtown West and the Stenstrom Student Center (SSC). There was one change order for the Construction Manager at Risk in the amount of \$6,167.33 and three change orders for the Demolition of the Downtown West Campus, with an overall credit of <\$504.07>, and two change orders for the SSC in the amount of \$8,681.00. Mr. Jenks stated that the SSC Lighting is 99% complete, with a \$50,225.20 contingency amount remaining in the budget.

### **6. Rock Valley College Events Calendar**

Mr. Jenks presented the RVC on-campus events calendar for April and May 2025. He highlighted the Campus Culture and Belonging Spring Symposium that will be held on April 2, 2025, and the Blackhawk Area Boy Scouts Council 50th Annual Derby that took place April 4-6, 2025. He also mentioned the CEANCI Technology and Engineering Education Regional Competition at the ATC on April 11, 2025, the RVC Professional Development Day that is taking place on April 17, 2025, and the RVC 60th Anniversary CEO Challenge that is taking place on April 25, 2025. Dr. Spearman gave information on the CEO Challenge and the events that will be taking place. Discussion ensued.

## **New Business/Unfinished Business**

- 1. New Business:** There was no new business.

## **2. Unfinished Business:**

- Dr. Spearman asked the Board of Trustees for direction as to whether the Board wants to move forward with the Property Tax Program with the City of Rockford. Trustee Nelson said he would favor the Program but would like RVC's legal counsel to review the contract.

### **Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting**

The next Regular and Reorganization Board of Trustees Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

### **Next Committee of the Whole Meeting**

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 5:15 p.m., in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) of the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus.

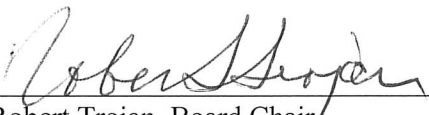
### **Adjourn**

At 6:59 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Cardenas Cudia, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by: Tracy L. Luethje

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Richard Kennedy, Secretary  
Term as Board Secretary and Trustee expired.  
Not available for signature.



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Robert Trojan, Board Chair