

Illinois Community College District No. 511
Rock Valley College
3301 Mulford Road, Rockford, IL, 61114
Educational Resource Center, Performing Arts Room, Room 0214

MINUTES – FISCAL YEAR 2026 PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
June 24, 2025, 5:15 p.m.

The Fiscal Year 2025 Public Budget Hearing was called to order at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, by Board Chair Paul Gorski in Room 0214 (Performing Arts Room) in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus of Rock Valley College.

Roll Call

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

Mr. Paul Gorski	Mr. Robert Trojan
Ms. Kristen Simpson	Dr. Jenna Goldsmith
Mr. John Nelson joined at 5:16 p.m.	Mr. Isiah Blake, Student Trustee

The following trustees were absent at roll call: Ms. Crystal Soltow, Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia.

Attorney Matthew Gardner confirmed that because the item “Board Member Attendance by Means Other than Physical Presence” was on the agenda for the regular meeting, it also would be applicable for the FY2026 Public Budget Hearing.

At 5:17 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to allow Trustees Crystal Soltow and Gloria Cardenas Cudia to join the meeting via telephone. The motion was approved by majority roll call vote. Trustees Trojan, Simpson, Goldsmith, and Gorski voted yes. Trustee Nelson voted no. Student Trustee Blake voted yes (advisory). Trustees Soltow and Cudia entered the meeting via telephone.

Board Chair Gorski announced that all persons who desire to be heard will have an opportunity to present oral testimony to do so. Mr. Gorski introduced Vice President of Finance Ellen Olson, who reviewed the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget.

Vice President Olson noted the following:

- On April 22, 2025, the Board of Trustees approved the tentative budget for Fiscal Year 2026.
- The College published the notice of hearing.
- The Budget has been on display in the Financial Services office since May 22, 2025, and has been available online as well as for public viewing. There have been no changes to the budget.
- Total Budget, including contingency of \$3,797,260, is \$233,618,543
 - Operating Funds: \$69,326,152 which includes the contingency
 - Non-Operating Funds: \$164,292,391
 - Capital Projects – \$119.5 million
 - Bonds & Interest - \$14.5 million
 - Auxiliary Funds - \$16.4 million
 - Restricted/Grants – \$18.9 million
 - Trust & Agency (Student Clubs) - \$714,000
 - Audit - \$60,000
 - Liability, Protection & Settlement - \$1.8 million
 - OPEB – reversal of \$7.8 million (Other Post-Employment Benefits)
 - SURS – \$250,000 (State University Retirement System)

Following the conclusion of Vice President Olson's report, Board Chair Gorski invited public testimony concerning the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget. There were no requests from the public to address to trustees.

At 5:21 p.m., A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to close the Public Budget Hearing. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote, and Board Chair Gorski declared the Public Budget closed.

**Illinois Community College District No. 511
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Educational Resource Center, Performing Arts Room, Room 0214**

**MINUTES - REGULAR MEETING
June 24, 2025, 5:15 p.m.
(Immediately following the FY2026 Public Budget Hearing)**

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 Performing Arts Room (PAR), Room 0214, in the Educational Resource Center (ERC) on the main campus. Board Chair Paul Gorski called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

Roll Call

Mr. Paul Gorski
Ms. Kristen Simpson
Dr. Jenna Goldsmith
Ms. Crystal Soltow

Mr. Bob Trojan
Mr. John Nelson
Ms. Gloria Cardenas Cudia
Student Trustee Mr. Isiah Blake

Note: Trustee Soltow and Trustee Cudia previously joined the meeting by telephone for the FY2026 Public Budget Hearing and remained on the line for the regular meeting.

Also in attendance: Dr. Howard Spearman, President; Dr. Amanda Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Chief Academic Officer; Dr. Terrica Huntley, 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 Cultural Excellence, Ms. Ann Kerwitz, Assistant to the President, Ms. Araceli Olvera, Interim Executive Assistant, Ms. Tracy Luethje, Executive Assistant to the Chief Operations Officer, Attorney Matthew Gardner, Robbins Schwartz.

Communications and Petitions (Public Comment)

There were no communications, petitions, or public comments.

Recognition of Visitors

There were no visitors to be recognized.

Adjourn to Closed Session

At 5:23 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to adjourn to closed session to discuss 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), in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. The motion was approved by a majority roll call vote. Trustees Gorski, Trojan, Simpson, Goldsmith, Cudia, and Soltow voted yes. Trustee Nelson voted no. Student Trustee Blake voted yes (advisory).

Reconvene Open Session

At 5:46 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Simpson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to reconvene to open session. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote. No action was taken as a result of the Closed Session.

General Presentations

There were no general presentations.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting and May 27, 2025, Regular meeting. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Action Items

Board Chair Gorski asked Attorney Matthew Gardner whether a motion was necessary to move agenda items. Attorney Gardner confirmed that a motion was not required. Following this clarification, Mr. Gorski proposed that item 13, Personnel Report BR8298, be moved as the first item in the action items.

1. BR8298 - Personnel Report

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board approves the following personnel actions listed on BR8298.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8298. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a majority roll call vote. Trustees Gorski, Goldsmith, Simpson, Soltow, and Cudia voted yes. Trustees Trojan and Nelson voted no. Student Trustee Blake (advisory) voted yes.

Board Chair Gorski moved item four, FY26 Final Budget, BR8289, to item two, and item five, Certificate Attesting to the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget, BR8290, to item three in the action items.

2. BR8289 – FY2026 Final Budget

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt the Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget as the budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2025, for Community College District No. 511, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb, McHenry, Stephenson, and Ogle Counties.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Cudia, to approve BR8289. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

3. BR8290 – Certificate Attesting to the FY2026 Final Budget

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Secretary and Chairperson of the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees attest to the attached Fiscal Year 2026 Final Budget being a true and correct copy in its legal form.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8290. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Board Chair Gorski moved item 2.b.i., Purchase Report B-1, BR8287-B-1, to item four on the action items.

4. BR8287-B-1 – Purchase Report B-1 – FY2026 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: it is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-B-1, Purchase Report B-1 – FY2026 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Soltow, to approve BR8287-B-1.

Trustees' comments included:

- Trustee Nelson shared that based on his research from an article from ESPN regarding turf and injuries, and other reasons that he is against turf.
- Trustee Simpson stated that she sees using turf as moving ahead with the times for new athletes.
- Trustee Trojan asked if the President and his Cabinet had further research or facts regarding turf. Also, he did more research by visiting Hononegah School District to observe their turf fields, and was told that the primary reason the school chose turf is to extend the athletic year in severe weather conditions.
- Trustee Cudia stated that from her experience working at the Rockford Park District, she is voting based on her research and conscience.
- Board Chair Gorski stated that injuries should have been addressed when the request to move to turf was presented to the Board, and that there aren't enough reliable sources to support turf. However, he appreciates that additional research was provided from the President's Office.

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

5. BR8286 – Claims Sheet (Check Register – May 2025)

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the claims sheets from the Ellucian check register for the period from May 1, 2025, to May 31, 2025. The total is \$5,007,364.02.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8286. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

6. BR8287-A –Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments

The Board Report reads in part: it is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-A, on Purchase Report A – FY2025 Amendments.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8287-A. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

7. BR8287-B-2 – Purchase Report B-2 – FY2026 Purchases

The Board Report reads in part: it is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-B-2, Purchase Report B-2 – FY2026 Purchases.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8287-B-2. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

8. BR8287-C - Purchase Report C – FY2026 Site Rentals

The Board Report reads in part: it is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-C, Purchase Report C – FY2026 Site Rentals.

A motion was made by Trustee Cudia, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve BR8287-C. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

At 6:05 p.m., Trustee Soltow left the meeting.

9. BR8287-D – Purchase Report D – FY2026 Software Licensing Renewals

The Board Report reads in part: it is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-D, Purchase Report D – FY2026 Software Licensing Renewals.

A motion was made by Trustee Simpson, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8287-D.

Trustee Nelson asked if Board Chair Gorski supports the majority of items on Purchase Report D, considering his expertise in Information Technology. Trustee Trojan asked for clarification on whether these items were renewals.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

10. BR8287-E – Purchase Report E – FY2026 Blanket Purchase Orders

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board approves the items marked on BR8287-E, Purchase Report E – FY2026 Blanket Purchase Order.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Blake, to approve BR8287-E. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a majority roll call vote. Trustees Gorski, Simpson, Goldsmith, Trojan, and Cudia voted yes. Trustee Nelson voted no. Student Trustee Blake (advisory) voted yes.

11. BR8288 – Bond Parameters Resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$56,250,000 General Obligation Community College bonds, Series 2025B, for the purpose of paying claims against the District, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on the bonds and authorizing the sale of the bonds to the purchaser thereof.

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves the resolution providing for the issue of not to exceed \$56,250,000 General Obligation Community College Bonds for the purpose of paying claims against the Rock Valley College Community College District No. 511, providing for the levy of a direct annual tax sufficient to pay the principal and interest on said bonds, and authorizing the proposed sale of said bonds to the purchaser thereof.

Attorney Reviewed.

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8288.

In response to a question from Trustee Nelson, Vice President of Finance Ellen Olson reviewed the breakdown of the \$56,250,000, the timeline, and the payoff schedule.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

11. BR8291 – Compensation Adjustment for Non-Represented Employees (Educational Support Personnel (ESP), Professional Staff Association (PSA) and Administrative Employees

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the following salary increases be approved for active full-time and continuous part-time (CPT) employees in grades J through V.

Effective July 1, 2025

- A 3.25% increase will be added to the base pay of each full-time ESP/PSA/Administrative employee for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.
- Employees hired on or after July 1, 2025, are not eligible for this pay increase.
- Estimated fiscal impact is \$429,800.

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8291. Trustee Nelson stated the increase is based on the assessment from Chief Financial Officer Ellen Olson.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

12. BR8292 – 2025-2027 Career Pathways Jump Start (CPJS) Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) – Belvidere Community Unit School District #100

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Career Pathways Jump Start Intergovernmental Agreement with Belvidere Community Unit School District #100, effective the date both parties have approved and executed the Agreement, for classes beginning Summer 2025, and expire automatically on June 30, 2027. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Student Trustee Blake, to approve BR8292. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

At 6:15 p.m., Trustee Cudia left the meeting. Board Chair Gorski announced that there were still enough Trustees physically present for a quorum.

13. BR8293 – Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Belvidere Community Unit School District #100

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding between Rock Valley College and Belvidere Community Unit School District #100 beginning August 1, 2025, and expiring on June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Simpson, to approve BR8293. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

14. BR8294 – Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – Hononegah Community High School #207

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Dual and Articulated Credit Memorandum of Understanding between Rock Valley College and Hononegah Community High School District #207 beginning August 1, 2025, and expiring on June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Simpson, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8294. Board Chair Gorski commented that he appreciates all the area districts for their participation in the Early College agreements with Rock Valley College.

The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

15. BR8295 – Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) – Belvidere Community Unit School District #100

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees approves the Running Start Intergovernmental Agreement with Belvidere Community Unit School District #100, effective as of the date both parties approve and execute the Agreement, for classes beginning Summer 2025, and automatically expiring on June 30, 2026. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to approve BR8295. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

16. BR8296 – Number not assigned

17. BR8297 – 2025-2026 Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Highway Construction Careers Training Program (HCCTP)

The Board Report reads in part: It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approves an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Illinois Department of Transportation and Rock Valley College at a not-to-exceed amount of \$390,419 for Rock Valley College to administer the 2025-2026 Illinois Department of Transportation Highway Construction Careers Training Program. **Attorney Reviewed.**

A motion was made by Trustee Trojan, seconded by Trustee Nelson, to approve BR8297. There was no discussion. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Board Chair Gorski reminded that the Personnel Report, BR8289, has already been voted on and approved.

Other Business

1. New Business

There was no new business.

2. Unfinished Business

- President Spearman provided an update on the Electroform Tax Abatement, stating that CFO Ellen Olson contacted Mr. Wade Clark, the owner, confirming that the College would consider a 10-year tax abatement. Also, Dr. Spearman met with Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara, who will take the lead, including a written proposal to provide to the Board at a later date.

Board Chair Gorski stated that the Board hasn't received a formal action to consider due to the lack of communication. The Board should receive a form of actionable item to review.

- President Spearman informed the Board that the College received a water connection bill from the City of Rockford of approximately \$26,000 for the Downtown West construction project that must be paid by Friday, June 27, 2025. The administration will move forward with paying the bill, and the Board should expect to see the expense in next month's purchase reports.

Board Chair Gorski clarified that President Spearman alerted him as soon as he could. Mr. Gorski also said that paying bills is a priority for the College.

Trustee Nelson requested more information about the \$26,000 water bill, specifically inquiring about what the payment covers. Vice President Olson confirmed that this bill is for the connection fees required to connect both buildings of the Downtown West Campus Project to the water system.

Trustee Trojan asked for clarification that the College has to pay the fees before the water is connected. President Spearman indicated that Chief Operations Officer Rick Jenks wanted to address this matter transparently with the Board before it was added to the purchase reports.

Updates/Reports

1. President's Update

On June 18, 2025, President Spearman participated in the Non-credit/Workforce Development CNC Completion Ceremony at the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), where students had the opportunity to earn five credentials with the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS). The five credentials of the program are: Measurement, Materials & Safety; Mill Setup; Lathe Setup; Mill Programming; and Lathe Programming. Out of 12 enrolled students, 11 completed the program, earning a total of 30 credentials between them. The students received 48 interview opportunities and secured 20 job offers. As of last Wednesday, eight students had accepted positions and started work this week. He also spoke with a parent who shared his son's journey from uncertainty about his future and a lack of identity to a place of confidence and pride in his accomplishments at RVC. Dr. Spearman expressed his gratitude to Vice President Dr. Hansen Stewart, Dean of Workforce Development Peter Held, and CNC Instructors Chance Kruse and Patrick Chamoun for their invaluable support.

2. Leadership Update

- Vice President Heather Snider provided an enrollment update, noting that the Summer II session began on June 16 with a second four-week session beginning July 14. The fall semester begins August 16, and as of June 24, we are 6% ahead of last year, 76% to the budget, and 73% to the stretch goal. She also provided an update on billboard campaigns throughout the district and in Southern Wisconsin. In addition, a team of faculty, staff, and administrators has been accepted to the American Association of Colleges and Universities' 2025-2026 Institute on Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum.
- Dr. Patrick Peyer congratulated the RVC Golf team that recently competed in the national tournament in Chautauqua, NY. He also provided an update on two educational and college-exposure trips taken by staff and students of the TRiO program. In addition, the Aviation Maintenance Program Annual Career Fair held recently welcomed 101 current students and 12 company partners to engage in networking and hiring opportunities. RVC's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) chapter was recognized as a Five-Star chapter, the highest level of engagement in PTK programs, at the group's recent national convention. Several RVC students also received awards for their outstanding contributions.
- Dr. Keith Barnes provided an update on the College's commemoration of Juneteenth. He also congratulated ADA Compliance Coordinator Eric Brown for his appointment to the Illinois Statewide Independent Living Council.
- Vice President Ellen Olson thanked trustees for approving the FY2026 Budget prior to the start of the fiscal year. She added that the bond sale will be in early July and closing by the end of the month. In the absence of COO Rick Jenks, she shared that the first vertical wall has been erected at the Downtown West campus construction.

3. Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA) Report

Trustee Nelson shared an update on legislation regarding baccalaureate degrees being offered at community colleges and how that could affect regional universities' enrollment rates. Trustees are encouraged to network with their local and state legislators to move forward with offering baccalaureate degrees in community colleges.

4. Trustees' Comments

- Trustee Nelson mentioned his six years serving as an RVC Board Member, along with Mr. Paul Gorski, and feels that, since being a member, they are seen rather than heard. He noted

that they both have an extensive background in politics that is invaluable to Board governance.

- Trustee Simpson announced that she will not be in attendance at the July 8, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting.
- Trustee Trojan commended the increase in enrollment, as it is the key factor for the College. Board Chair Gorski concurred.
- Trustee Goldsmith shared that she saw a billboard for the Starlight Theatre on Alpine and Newburg Road, stating that it was a beacon for the College and a great distraction.
- Board Chair Gorski asked the administration to share more information with the Board regarding the parades for the upcoming Fourth of July weekend. He also shared an analogy using a book called "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie," about the cause and effect of communication between the Board and Administration. He recommends that when the administration gives a presentation, it should provide specific information. The Board should also use this approach when requesting information. He also provided trustees with a handbook from the Illinois Community College Trustee Association. The handbook outlines their responsibilities in policy and fiduciary matters and includes suggestions for actions and making changes to policies.

5. Student Trustee Report

Student Trustee Isiah Blake reported his goals and responsibilities as the 2025-2026 Student Trustee. He shared that he will focus on orienting in his role, including reviewing Board governance and the College's policies, as well as practicing critical thinking skills, which he hopes will make a meaningful impact on the student body. Since the summer term moves quietly, he is preparing groundwork for the fall term, where he plans to begin outreach to student organizations to meet the needs of the student community. He plans to attend the RVC SMART Camp program to perceive students' experiences and the new student orientation events, which are great networking opportunities. He expressed his commitment to his new role and is using the summer to learn, reflect, and prepare. He gave his appreciation for his opportunity to serve and work with the Board.

6. RVC Foundation Report

Trustee Trojan reported that the Foundation has awarded 389 scholarships to 353 students during the first application period. The second chance scholarship application period opens in mid-August for several weeks. The scholarship budget for Fiscal Year 2026 is a new record of about \$900,000. The Downtown West Campus campaign has a goal of \$2.5 million, and he commended Chief Development Officer Brittany Freiberg, who has close to \$1.5 million already committed.

7. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report

The FOIA report was accepted as presented.

Adjourn to Closed Session

There was no closed session.

Next meeting

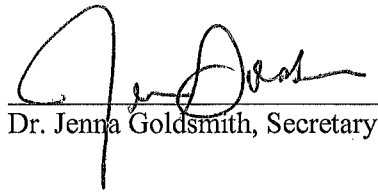
The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on July 8, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

The next Regular Meeting will be held on July 22, 2025, in the Performing Arts Room (PAR, Room 0214) located in the Educational Resources Center (ERC) on the main campus.

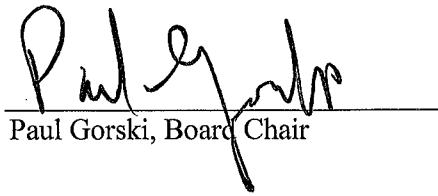
Adjournment

At 6:57 p.m., a motion was made by Trustee Nelson, seconded by Trustee Trojan, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Submitted by Araceli Olvera



Dr. Jenna Goldsmith, Secretary



Paul Gorski, Board Chair